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### Cyclical Time in Mazdaism and Ismailism

#### I. Cyclical Time in Mazdaism

##### THE AGES OF THE WORLD IN ZOROASTRIAN MAZDAISM

A little manual of Mazdean doctrine, written in Pahlavi and dating from the fourth century of our era, contains a number of questions the answers to which everyone over the age of fifteen is supposed to know. The first questions are: "Who am I and to whom do I belong? Whence have I come and whither am I returning? What is my lineage and what is my race? What is my proper calling in earthly existence? . . . Did I come from the celestial world, or is it in the earthly world that I began to be? Do I belong to Ohrmazd or to Ahriman? To the angels or the demons?"<sup>1</sup>

And here are the answers:

I came from the celestial world (*mēnōk*), it is not in the terrestrial world (*gētīk*) that I began to be. I was originally manifested in the spiritual state, my original state is not the terrestrial state.<sup>2</sup>

1 *Pand Nāmak i Zartusht* (The Book of Counsels of Zartusht). The short treatise is also entitled *Citak Handarz i Pōryōtkeshān* (Selected Instructions of the First Doctors of the Faith). Its authorship remains doubtful. One tradition attributes it to the Grand Mōbaδ Aturpat i Mahraspandān, a high dignitary of the Mazdean clergy whom the Sassanid King Shapur II (A.D. 309-79) had empowered to establish the definitive canonical text of the Avesta, divided into twenty-one books or *nask*. A little "book of counsels" by this author has come down to us. It is dedicated to his son Zartusht (so named to assure him of the holy prophet Zarathustra's spiritual sponsorship). But a "book of counsels" is also attributed to his son, who in his turn was Grand Mōbaδ under Ardashir II (A.D. 379-83). A critical edition of our *Pand Nāmak* has been published by H. S. Nyberg in *Hilfsbuch des Pehlevi*, Vol. I (Uppsala, 1928), pp. 17-30, 68-69. Cf. also J. C. Tarapore, *Pahlavi Andarz-Nāmak* (Bombay, 1933). The questions quoted here occur in Strophe 1.

2 On the contrast between the meanings of the verbs *āfrītan* and *būtan*, cf. Nyberg, *Bilfsbuch des Pehlevi*, Vol. II (Uppsala and Leipzig, 1931), Glossary, s.v.; and Heinrich Junker, "Über iranische Quellen der hellenistischen Aion-Vorstellung," *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg* (Leipzig), I (1923), 133-34.

I belong to Ohrmazd (Ahura Mazda, the Lord Wisdom), not to Ahriman (the Spirit of Evil and of Darkness); I belong to the angels, not to the demons. . . . I am the creature of Ohrmazd, not the creature of Ahriman. I hold my lineage and my race from Gay5mart (primordial Man, Anthropos). My mother is Spandarmat (Angel of the Earth), my father is Ohrmazd. . . . The accomplishment of my vocation consists in this: to think of Ohrmazd as present Existence (*hastih*), which has always existed (*hamē-būtih*), and will always exist (*hamē-bāvelih*). To think of him as immortal sovereignty, as Unlimitation and Purity. To think of Ahriman as pure negativity (*nestih*), exhausting himself in nothingness (*avīn-būtih*), as the Evil Spirit who formerly did not exist in this Creation, and who one day will cease to exist in Öhrmazd's Creation and who will collapse at the final time.<sup>3</sup> To consider my true self as belonging to Ohrmazd and the Archangels (*Amahraspandān*).

These few simple but decisive formulas project the responses simultaneously on a horizon both of pre-existence and of superexistence. They imply that the moment of birth and the moment of death, recorded so carefully in our vital statistics, are neither our absolute beginning nor our absolute end. They imply that time, as we commonly conceive of it, as a line of indeterminate length, losing itself in the mists of the past and the future, has literally no sense, but is simply the absurd. If a modern mathematical philosophy has taught us to conceive of time as a fourth dimension added to the three dimensions of space, we may say that the myth of Mazdean cosmogony reveals to us something in the nature of still another dimension (a fifth dimension?), the one which situates a being's "elevation" of light or depth of darkness.

The terms "elevation," or "height," and "depth" suggest the dimensions of visual space,<sup>4</sup> and the exigencies of language compel the myth to place the power of light and the opposing power of darkness in this sort of spatial relation to one another. Yet any geometrical representation is doomed to failure, since we must conceive of a space both infinite and limited. For in point of fact, the primordial Light and Darkness do not occupy a space

3 Strophes 2, 3. Cf. the somewhat different translation in Junker, p. 133 (*avīn būtih*, to have become invisible).

4 Or better still, since this light has been announced to us as vibrating eternally with the voice of Ohrmazd (cf. below), we might evoke the idea of a sonorous space: a being in whom the archetypal dimension that shines through resembles a musical motif which, in marking its own outline, also utters the promise of its metamorphoses. In it the limited and the unlimited coincide.

that is situated and defined in advance; they establish a space that is absolutely peculiar to themselves, that can only be measured in terms of light and darkness. The height or depth of light may be designated as eternal Time, and the space of light, in which awaken the creatures of light, who fulfill the thoughts of this light, is eternally born from this eternal Time.

It is then in this depth of light that originates the personal existence of the being who recognizes himself on earth "as belonging to Ohrmazd and the Archangels." But the time in which are inscribed the moment of his coming into the earthly form of existence and the moment of his final departure from it is not the eternal Time of this depth of light. It is a time which originated in it, which is in its image, but which is necessitated and limited by the acts of a cosmic drama of which it marks the prelude and whose conclusion will also be its own. Deriving from this eternal Time it returns to its origin,<sup>5</sup> taking with it the beings who intervene as the cast of characters in its cycle, because in this drama each one of them "personifies" a permanent role which was assigned them by another Time. Essentially a "time of return," it has the form of a cycle. The Mazdean cosmogony tells us that time has two essential aspects: the Time without shore, without origin (*Zervān-i akanārak*), eternal Time; and limited time or "the time of long domination" (*Zervān-i deranγ xvatāi*), the *Αἰών* in the strict sense, although eternal Time also tends to assume this name. Eternal Time is the paradigm, the model of limited time that was made in its image. And that is why our time itself, as a dimension of earthly existence, gives an intimation of a dimension other than its own chronological dimension—a dimension of light which determines its form and meaning. Inversely, the absence or annihilation of this dimension measures the depth of darkness of one who is in this time. Since it discloses this relation with the origin, the dimension of light may be called the archetypal dimension; as such, it characterizes and situates a being of Light, a being of Ohrmazdean essence. Forming a bond between this being and an eternal Time to which the limited time of his actual form of existence carries him back, this archetypal di-

S Cf. H. S. Nyberg, "Questions de cosmogonie et de cosmologie mazdéennes," *Journal asiatique* (Paris), CCXIV : 2 (Apr.-June, 1929) ["Questions," I], p. 214, li. g. Note the use of the verb *gumēšit* for the return of limited time into unlimited Time; this is the same word which serves to designate the "mixture" (*gumēšišin*) of Darkness with Light. Cf. also R. C. Zaehner, "Zurvanica," III, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies* (London), IX (1937-39), *Dēnkart* text 228 on p. 880, and the long extract from *Denkart* 282 on pp. 883-84.

mension commands a very specific experience of eternity, or rather the anticipation which makes possible—or which translates—the conception of a cyclical time that is not the Time of an eternal return, but the time of a return to an eternal origin.

The concept of this dimension of light, an archetypal dimension because it grounds every being in another self which keeps eternally ahead of him, can provide us with the key to a celestial world inhabited by figures who are constituted and governed in their being by a law of their own, a law with its very own logic. The responses we have just read refer to the twofold plane or twofold state of being which characterizes Mazdean ontology, and which is designated by the two terms *menok* and *gētīk*. We must take care not to reduce the contrast they express to a Platonic schema pure and simple. We are not dealing precisely with an opposition between idea and matter, or between the universal and the perceptible. *Menok* should, rather, be translated by a celestial, invisible, spiritual, but perfectly concrete state. *Gētīk*<sup>6</sup> designates an earthly visible, material state, but of a matter which is in itself wholly luminous, a matter immaterial in relation to the matter that we actually know.<sup>7</sup> For, and this is the peculiarly Mazdean conception, a transition to the state of *gētīk* means in itself not a fall but rather fulfillment and plenitude. The state of infirmity, of lesser being and darkness represented by the present condition of the material world, results not from its material condition as such but from the fact that it is the zone invaded by the demonic Contrary Powers, the arena of struggle and also the prize. Here the stranger to this creation is not the God of Light but the Principle of Darkness. Redemption will bring the flowering of the *tan i pasen*, the "body to come," the *corpus resurrectionis*; it does not tend to destroy the *gētīk* world, but to restore it to its luminous state, its archetypal dimension.

This dimension of light constitutes every being, every physical or moral entity of the earthly world, as the counterpart of a celestial (or *mēnōk*) reality with which it forms a pair; this *menok* is its spiritual entity, its archetype, its "angel." It is by establishing this dimension that the Mazdean metaphysical imagination attests its characteristic aptitude for configuring hypostases, for making the features of a celestial Person shine through all reality. This representative norm is so fundamental that Time itself, in

6 On these two concepts cf. Xyberg, *Journal asiatique*, CCXIX: 1 (Jul.-Sept., 1931) ["Questions," II], pp. 31-36.

7 Cf. also *Shkand-Gumānik Vicar* . . . , ed. Jean de Menasce (Fribourg, Switzerland, 1945), Vol. IV, pp. 16-20, and the remarks on "Questions," II, 12-18, on p. 36.

either of its aspects, will be apprehended as a person with definite traits. It is precisely in this personal guise that we mean to consider it, and let us now, for a few moments, reflect on this point.

Logic, if it is not to be discomfited, must conform to the requirements of this norm, for the characteristic of such hypostases is to exist both in themselves and in what they accomplish. What results is not a confusion of the planes of being, but a communicability of names, that sometimes creates difficulties for our thinking—and the worst solution to these difficulties would be to degrade these figures into simple allegories. All our efforts must be directed toward safeguarding and justifying the play of “transparitions” which are made possible in this new dimension of depth in light precisely here and not otherwise or elsewhere. It will become clear to us that if time can be apprehended as a person, it is because, far from being our familiar, abstract notion, it is an archetypal Person—that is to say, this time configures and prefigures the form that a luminous being must take or regain—and because, as time of trial and of combat, it is the mediator of this metamorphosis. Thus is established a homology between the time of action of each personal being and the Time of the total cycle; between fulfilled personal being and the "Person" of eternal Time.

Once these premises have been established, it would seem that by giving our attention to this "person of time" and the variations of its features as manifested to mental vision, we may also distinguish, beneath the variants of the cosmogonic schema, the anthropological differentials characterizing pure Mazdaism on the one hand and the dramaturgy that has been designated as Zervanism on the other, because of the central role played by Zervan in it (and because its schema in turn discloses important variants).

Let us roughly outline the ideal schematization of the possible conceptions. For the pure dualist vision, that of Zoroastrian Mazdaism, the precosmic drama in which the cycle of our "aeon" originated is provoked by the attack and invasion of a Contrary Power, exterior and alien to Ohrmazd, God of Light. Ahriman, Spirit of Evil, of negation and darkness, rises up from a bottomless abyss of undisclosed origin, existing prior to all cause. For the **Zervanist** vision, the drama takes place within the very person of Zervan, eternal Time or absolute Time, as the supreme godhead which by itself gives rise both to the principle of light and to the antagonist. Here, it seems to me, we have a much more serious differential than that between two

different theological interpretations of an identical situation.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, from the standpoint of pure Mazdaism, an attempt at reduction was conceivable; such an attempt results in a schema that might be designated as Mazdeanized Zervanism or as Zervanized Mazdaism.

The schema of integral Zervanism undergoes in turn certain dramaturgical changes: the idea of a mediation appears in the person of the Angel Mithras, who, according to the Zoroastrian theology of our times, shows certain points of resemblance to the Archangel Michael.<sup>9</sup> Finally, the unity that gives rise to the two Contraries is situated no longer at the level of the supreme godhead but at the level of an emanated angelic hypostasis: this hypostasis will assume the role of a Saved Savior, a kind of Archangel Michael who has had to gain his own victory over himself, and the periods of cyclical time must mark this victory in the person of all his followers. This is the form that the drama and the role of the angel of humanity will assume in Ishmaelite Gnosis.

In the mythohistory of pure Mazdaism, cyclical time is punctuated by three great acts which extend over twelve millennia and constitute the ages of the world. The first of these acts is the primordial Creation (*Bundahishm*), encompassing the prelude of the first three millennia, during which the Creation is established in its *mēnōk*, subtle and celestial, state. In the ensuing period from the fourth to the sixth millennium, the Creation is transferred to the *gēlīk*, or earthly, state. Then comes the second act: the catastrophe. The Negator, whose menace had risen up from the abyss at the very outset of the spiritual Creation, succeeds in entering and ravaging material creation. This second act constitutes the period of the "mixture" (*gume-*

8 A. Christensen tends toward a reduction of this sort in *L'Iran sous les Sassanides* (2nd edn., Copenhagen, 1944), p. 154, n. 4; p. 437. Cf. Nyberg, "Questions," II, pp. 81, 82; and *Die Religionen des alten Irans*, German tr. by H. H. Schaeder (Leipzig, 1938), pp. 388ff. (Zervanism as the cosmogonic doctrine of the Median magi before they became Zoroastrians). J. Bidez and F. Cumont, *Les Mages hellénisés* (Paris, 1938), Vol. I, pp. 63ff. E. Benveniste, *The Persian Religion according to the Chief Greek Texts* (Paris, 1929), ch. 4 (Zervanism as the doctrine of the Magi recorded by Plutarch); Cumont's arguments to the contrary—*Les Mages hellénisés*, Vol. I, pp. 65-66, and Vol. II, p. 72, n. 1—are not conclusive. See also Benveniste, pp. 77, 97: Zervān in Soghdian Buddhism and in Manichaeism; here, we may note, the question of the historical existence of a "Zervanite church" does not arise, for we have set out to consider only the pure philosophical schematization of certain concepts and their phenomenological connection with the mode of existence that they indicate.

9 J. J. Modi, "St. Michael of the Christians and Mithra of the Zoroastrians," in *Anthropological Papers*, Part I (Bombay, 1911), pp. 173-90; cf. below, nn. 51 and 55, and Part 2, p. 155, n. 47.

*ĕishn*), which we are still experiencing.<sup>10</sup> It will end with the act of final "separation" (*viĉarishn*), ushered in by the *Saoshyant* or Saviors born from the race of Zarathustra in the course of the three last millennia, and by the "transfiguration" of the world (*frashokart*).<sup>11</sup>

In the Mazdean book of Genesis, the *Bundahishn*, we read as follows:

It hath been revealed that during the unlimited Time, Ohrmazd was in the heights, adorned with omniscience and goodness and surrounded by light. This light is the place and abode of Ohrmazd. Some call it the infinite Light (*asar roshnih*). This omniscience and this goodness are the garment of Ohrmazd. Some call it the Religion (*Den*). . . . The Time of the garment is infinite, for the goodness and religion of Ohrmazd have existed as long as Ohrmazd himself; they still exist and they will always exist." <sup>12</sup>

Here the unlimited Time is neither a principle superior to Ohrmazd nor is it his creation; it is an aspect of his illimitableness; it expresses his very being, which is also expressed by his omniscience and by the infinite light in which he resides. However, a play of transpositions, which, as we have said, are possible only in this dimension of thought, ultimately put us in the presence of time as a plastically defined figure. From eternal Time and in the image of eternal Time, Ohrmazd created the limited Time he required to frustrate the challenge of Ahriman; he was said to have created it "in the form of a youth of fifteen, luminous, clear-eyed, of tall stature, full of a vigor resulting from a perfect endowment and not from a brutal and violent nature." <sup>13</sup> If in this vision of a youth we seem to discern a Mazdean form of the *puer aeternus* motif, we need only recall that the age of fifteen connotes the aspect which our texts give to the "resuscitated ones," <sup>14</sup> in order to realize that the "Person of Time" merely exemplifies the ideal dimension of a being of Light.

But more than this: if we give heed to the equivalences that are sub-

<sup>10</sup> On the six millennia the duration of the actual world, cf. "Apocalypse d'Hystaspe," in Bidez and Cumont, *Les Mages hellénisés*, Vol. II, p. 364.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Nyberg, "Questions," I, pp. 210-11; G. Messina, *Libro apocalittico persiano Ayâtkâr i Zâmâspik* (Rome, 1939), pp. 118-20.

<sup>12</sup> "Questions," I, pp. 206-7; for a somewhat different translation see Messina, *Zamaspik*, p. 85, n. 3; cf. the text of the *Zâtsparam*, ch. 1, in Zaehner, "Zurvanica," II, pp. 576-77; A. V. VV. Jackson, *Zoroastrian Studies* (New York, 1928), pp. 114-15; and Junker "Iranische Quellen," pp. 127-28.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Nyberg, "Questions," I, p. 231.

<sup>14</sup> *Ayâtkâr i Zamaspik*, ch. 17, verse 16.

stituted for the denomination of Zervān, we shall perceive the intrinsic form of personal experience, the expectation projected in a vision whose "figures" present transpositions of one another. The text cited above has taught us that Religion (*Den*), as omniscience and goodness in infinite Time, is the garment of Ohrmazd, which surrounds and configures his being. Other texts teach us that "what has always been is the voice of Ohrmazd in the Light," and that from this eternal vibration of the Light, the religion of Ohrmazd<sup>15</sup> vibrates eternally. This eternal Voice which is the Creative Logos of Ohrmazd is also designated as the celestial (*mēnōk*) archetype of the Zoroastrian prayer formula par excellence, the formula known from its first words (*yaθaahu vairyo*) as the *Ahuvar*.<sup>16</sup> But this celestial archetype is also said to be *Den*, the eternal Religion. A late Persian translation expressly gives to Ahuvar the name of Zervān.<sup>17</sup> Thus there is an equivalence, a reciprocal transposition, between eternal Time, the celestial archetype of creative prayer, and the eternal Religion.

The substitution of *Den* for the celestial archetype of Ahuvar suggests that *Den* is precisely the uttering of the eternal Utterance, in which are grounded the melodic themes which state the modality of each being. But the representation of eternal Religion, which is also Omniscience and Goodness as typified in a hypostasis, suffices to orient us toward a whole body of speculations concerning Wisdom, or the divine Sophia. Actually *Den* (Religion) does not designate a simple institutional abstraction. The figure of Daēnā (Avestan form of the Pahlavi word *den*) is the principle of a whole strictly Mazdean sophiology.<sup>18</sup> Its extreme complexity makes a complete

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 2, verse 2.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. the whole of Chapter XIX of the *Yasna*. Each of the words composing this prayer designates symbolically one of the *nasks* of the Avesta. Held to have existed before the Creation, this prayer is conceived as a hypostasis, a veritable Logos-Sophia (just as Zarathustra's *Gathas* or psalms (cf. *Yasna LIV*) appear as angelic hypostases; it may be said that to recite them is literally to "recite an angel"). Cf. I. J. S. Taraporevala, *The Holy Word of the Religion of Zarathustra and the Holy Immortals* (Bombay, 1947); J. J. Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees* (2nd edn., Bombay, 1937), pp. 200-1; Nyberg, *Die Religionen*, pp. 268-69; J. Hertel, *Die Awestischen Herrschafts- und Siegesfeier* (Leipzig, 1931), p. 58. Unfortunately no two authorities agree about the translation.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. in E. B. N. Dhabhar, *The Persian Rīvāyats of Hormozyar Framarz* (Bombay, 1932), p. 438, the little Persian text in which Zarathustra asks Ohrmazd: "What was it that already existed when the world became existent?" Answer: "I and Ahunvar (Ahuvar), we both existed." A gloss adds: "Zervān is called 'Ahuvar.'"

<sup>18</sup> Cf. W. Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter* (3rd edn., Tübingen, 1926), pp. 37, 344ff., and 520, n. 3 (I expect to come back to this question elsewhere). Cf. also a Mazdean figure of Wisdom in *Mēnōkē Xrat* (the Book of Celestial



exposition difficult; like all the configurations of the Mazdean "imagination," it designates both an angelic hypostasis with personal traits, and its operating counterpart in the earthly being: here it is the visionary soul, the organ of the religious vision of wisdom,<sup>19</sup> in short that attribute of the earthly (*gēīk*) human being which enables him to be coupled with his celestial (*mēnōk*) reality. Let us simply compare two visions: Daēnā-Sophia is the garment and eternal Time of Ohrmazd. But she is also the feminine Angel who appears after death to the Mazdean soul that has battled faithfully, presenting herself to it as the celestial Self, the light-Self of that soul. Thus the soul incarnated on earth recognizes its celestial partner, or *paredros*, as a figure through which eternal Time is discernible. This comparison grants us a brief glimpse of the dimension of being presupposed by the representation of time in its Sophianic aspect.

Concentrating on the origin, which is also the direction of return, the imagination can face the combat.

"Ahriman rose from his depths," says the Bundahishn,<sup>20</sup> "and arrived at the frontier where the star of Lights (*star-i rōshnān*) is situated." His envious and hateful nature and his bloodthirstiness leap forward, but perceiving "a splendor and an ascendancy superior to his own," he falls back into his darkness to produce his Counter-Creation, the multitude of his demons dedicated to the work of destruction. Ohrmazd, in his gentleness characteristic of a being of Light (omniscient but not all-powerful), proposes peace to the Antagonist. But is it in his power to convert him into a being of Light? Ahriman replies with a bitter challenge: "I will rise up, I will urge thy creation to fall off from thee and become enamored of me." Ohrmazd knows that it is not in Ahriman's power to beguile all his creatures. But he also knows that to reduce the Contrary Power of Ahriman to impotence, he will need time, the limited time which he creates in the image of eternal Time; and for the struggle he suggests a period of nine millennia. His Adversary accepts, for his knowledge is of the kind that can only "retard," and he is thus unable to foresee the issue of the cosmic drama whose three great acts we have just mentioned.

Wisdom), Nyberg, "Questions," I, ch. 8, pp. 198-99. For the equivalence of *Den* and *Sophia* in Manichaeism, cf. "Questions," II, pp. 48ff. Cf. also Junker, "Iranische Quellen," p. 164, the end of his n. 50; R. Reitzenstein, *Das Iranische Erlösungsmysterium* (Bonn, 1921), pp. 102ff., 241-42.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Nyberg, *Die Religionen*, pp. 114-20.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Bundahishn, I, in Nyberg, "Questions," I, pp. 208-9.

And in still another grandiose episode the myth suggests that the "cycle of time," the "aeon," is for Ohrmazd the instrument of his victory over the Antagonist. Taking up Ahriman's challenge, Ohrmazd inflicts upon him a vision of the future, which Ahriman rejects but which nevertheless overwhelms him: in this vision he beholds the destruction of his demons, the coming of the Resurrection and of the "Future Body" (*tan i pasen*). Then Ohrmazd sings the *Ahuvar* stanza,<sup>21</sup> the resounding incantation shatters the space intervening between them, and Ahriman falls prostrate to the bottom of Darkness, where he remains for three millennia (the fourth, fifth, and sixth, during which Ohrmazd aided by the Archangels transfers his Creation from the *menok* to the *gētīk* state). But we have seen that the celestial archetype of the sacred *Ahuvar* stanza is a personification of Ohrmazd's Time and eternal Wisdom. Thus time is the mediator of Ahriman's defeat.

This episode reveals the hieratic nature of time; and this hieratic nature will give it a privileged position for the unveiling of the world of the archetypes. There is only one sure weapon, the hieratic weapon, the vibration of glorious Light in which Daēnā-Sophia, the wisdom of Ohrmazd, is eternally embodied. The fact that the sacred stanza of an eternal liturgy within the being of Ohrmazd is the "person" of time, instrument of the ruin of the demons, also defines the essentially liturgical character of this time. From end to end, the work of Creation and the work of Redemption constitute a cosmic liturgy. It is in celebrating the celestial liturgy (*menok yazishn*) that Ohrmazd and his Archangels establish all creation, and notably awaken the Fravartis (at once the celestial prototypes and the tutelary angels of men<sup>22</sup>) to the individuality and differentiated consciousness of their enduring Self. And it is by the ultimate celebration of the five liturgies of the *nychthemeron* that the last Saoshyant will accomplish the Resurrection.<sup>23</sup> The total time of the cycle which by the cooperation of all the luminous beings, of all the Fravartis coming to the aid of Ohrmazd, must ensure the defeat of Ahriman and the subjugation of his demons — this time is a liturgical time.

Of course the fractions of this time (years, months, days, hours) are in turn liturgical moments, homologous to the cycle of the aeon, because they themselves were first created in the celestial (*menok*) state. We have the

21 Ibid., p. 210, li. 18ff.

22 Ibid., p. 236, li. 15ff. (at the hour of the eternal celestial noon); 216, li. 20ff. (from the *Ahuvar* was created the celestial year). See also Junker, pp. 135-36, on time and creation as an epiphany of Ohrmazd.

23 *Zāmāšpīk*, ch. 17, verses 14, 15.

celestial Year, the five celestial sections of the Day, etc. That is why the duration of the millennia cannot be evaluated in the uniform time of our calendars; it is a liturgical time, that is to say, a continuity of liturgical moments.<sup>24</sup> And it is because this is a liturgical time, and because such a time is in essence cyclical, that the time of our cycle is actually conceived in the image of eternal Time. It is the epiphany of eternal Time: the created order as a temporal succession epiphanizes the eternal order which hierarchizes all celestial beings. Carried back to its transcendent origin, the temporal relation exemplifies the multiple organic relations between celestial archetypes; Creation in itself, as an epiphany of the *mēnōk* in the *gēlīk*, places the order of succession in limited time.<sup>25</sup> That is why the order of festivals, the entire cycle of the liturgic ceremonial, will be an image, a repetition of the cosmogony: six great solemn festivals (*Gāhambar*) correspond to the six great periods or creations distributed among the six supreme archangels (Ohrmazd is added to them as a seventh, just as the year encloses the totality of these festivals and with them forms a heptad).<sup>26</sup>

And henceforth, since each of the fractions of time has its celestial archetype and since the liturgical succession of these moments merely exemplifies the relations between these celestial hypostases, their very nomenclature will reveal a communicability of names in conformity with the norm of Mazdean ontology. Each of the twelve months of the year is named after a supreme Archangel (*Amahraspand*, the "Immortal Saints") or after one of the angels (*Yazata*, "venerable"); and so likewise each of the thirty days of the month. Finally, each of the canonical hours is also entrusted to the celestial being or angel who is its archetype, and takes his name;<sup>27</sup> and in its celestial

24 On this concept of hierophanic time cf. Mircea Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions* (Paris, 1949), pp. 334-35 (the only possible horizon for an understanding, for example, of the tradition dating the appearance of Zoroaster at 6,000 years before Plato).

25 Cf. Junker, "Iranische Quellen," p. 135, text of the *Dēnkart* in n. 31; on the relation between time and eternity, see Zaehner, "Zurvanica," I, p. 319 (for the quotation from Nāsir-e Khosraw, cf. H. Corbin and M. Moīn, eds., *Jāmi' al-Hikmatayn* (Bibliothèque Iranienne, A, 3; Teheran and Paris, 1953), p. 118, li. 8; "Zurvanica," III, p. 885; and de Menasce, *Shkand-Gumānik Vicar*, pp. 250-51. Limited cosmogonic time is the condition and foundation of Creation; it will be reabsorbed into infinite Time. Not that the world will disappear: "on the contrary, it remains, but transfigured and exempt from the taint of growing old, restored to the transcendent state which was its first state" (p. 251).

26 Cf. Nyberg, "Questions," I, pp. 227-35; Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies*, pp. 419-23.  
27 "Questions," I, p. 229 (Bundahishn, end of ch. I and ch. III); on the number of "thirty" *Amahraspands* (or "Archangels") cf. Dhalla (n. 44 below), pp. 357ff. On the canonical hours, see "Questions," I, p. 237 (celestial dawn, celestial noon, celestial sunset, etc.);

(*mēnōk*) entity each of these fractions of time is apprehended as a Person. It is this Person who gives the moments of earthly time their dimension as liturgical moments: one may say that the event of this day *is* this Person, the essence of this day is to be the day of this or that angel after whom it is named (e.g., the day of Ohrmazd of the month of Farvardīn). This relation to the angel is the archetypal dimension which gives to each fraction of limited time its dimension of height or depth in Light, its dimension of eternal Time. Finally, it is by this same token that the celestial partner of a human being of Light who has completed his cycle of earthly time may be manifested to him as an angelic Form, beneath whose name (Daena, Den) we have discerned eternal Time. When the angel says to the soul: "I am thy Daena," it is tantamount to saying: "I am thine Eternity, thine eternal Time."

To be sure, these notions present difficulties, for here thought operates not with concepts or abstract signs, but with concrete personal figures; their imperative presence fills the individual who, to contemplate them, must reflect them in himself. Then, without confusion of their persons, their reciprocal presence must compose a single whole. Time is not the abstract measure of the succession of days, but a celestial figure in which a creature projects his own totality, anticipates his own eternity, experiences himself in his own archetypal dimension. For although Time reveals itself in two aspects, one of which is an image of the other, it also reveals the disparity, the gap between the celestial Person and the earthly person which strives, or rather fails, to be its image. In view of all this, it is essential to consider how the variable relations between pure Mazdaism and Zervanism and the possible variations within Zervanism itself in regard to the relative degradation or preponderance of the person of time, enable the being who projects his own person into the person of time to anticipate his own eternity.

#### THE ABSOLUTE TIME OF ZERVANISM

We have characterized these variants as Zervanized Mazdaism and Mazdeanized Zervanism. Both schemas present a kind of attempt at a reduction of integral Zervanism, which affirms the absolute preponderance of Zervān, unlimited Time, over the two principles which, as a superior entity, pregnant

Jackson, *Zoroastrian Studies*, p. 129; Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies*, p. 219; F. von Spiegel, *Erānische Altertumskunde* (3 vols., Leipzig, 1871-78), Vol. II, p. 12.

with both of them, it generates. But Zoroastrian Mazdaism could not compromise in regard to the preponderance of Ohrmazd over Ahriman and their absolute heterogeneity. In the pure Mazdean vision Zervān, the Unlimited, expresses the very norm of Ohrmazd's being, which is also expressed by his Wisdom-Daēnā, his omniscience and his infinite Light. But if the figure of Zervan is removed from Ohrmazd's being and given precedence over it, a first consequence will be that the peculiar dimension which we noted in the beings created by his Light will become accentuated in Ohrmazd himself. And the second consequence will be that the two antagonistic principles will be reduced to the same inferior level with regard to Zervān. While this second consequence can only meet with absolute rejection on the part of pure Mazdaism, the first did not make a reduction of one schema to the other inconceivable, and perhaps even favored such a reduction.

What we may call Zervanized Mazdaism is attested principally by a Zervanite interpolation in the first chapter of the Bundahishn.<sup>28</sup> Here the subordination of Ohrmazd is attenuated; that is, it is marked above all by the notion that Ohrmazd became sovereign only through the Creation, conceived as an act of his thought.<sup>29</sup> This act of his thought first produces Creation in the celestial state and then exerts a kind of dialectic constraint over the ideal world of the Negating Spirit, by compelling it to manifest itself.<sup>30</sup> From the very outset Ohrmazd embodies movement, restlessness, and struggle, and the Mazdean theosophy endows him with a vision which would be incompatible with a rationalist theology of the pure act.

As for Mazdeanized Zervanism, it clings without hesitation to the preponderance of Zervan but like pure Mazdaism relegates the power of Ahriman to an outer abyss. It accentuates the above-mentioned traits in the person of Ohrmazd. This schema is attested principally by two texts. In

28 Cf. the penetrating analysis by which Nyberg discovered the expose of Zervanite cosmology interpolated into ch. I of the Bundahishn, in "Questions," II, pp. 36ff. (text in "Questions," I, p. 212, li. 3ff.). Philosophical schematization here imposes a distinction between Zervanite Mazdaism (integrating the name and concept of Zervān, who is subordinated to Ohrmazd, his maker) and Mazdeanized Zervanism (which subordinates Ohrmazd to Zervan but, unlike integral Zervanism, maintains the exteriority of the Antagonist). The premises and consequences of these variations have the broadest implications. On the word *zurvan* or *zervan* cf. "Questions," II, p. 52; Nyberg, *Die Religionen*, pp. 380-88; L. H. Gray, *The Foundations of the Iranian Religions* (Bombay, 1925), pp. 124-29.

29 "Questions," I, p. 212, li. 1-4, 13-17 (creation of unlimited Time and of the Time of Long Domination as an instrument).

30 *Ibid.*, li. 12-24; II, p. 40.

the Book of Celestial Wisdom,<sup>31</sup> Zervan appears as a sovereign of inalienable sovereignty: unaffected by Ahriman's Counter-Creation, he is exempt from old age, pain, and death, and it is with his approval that Ōhrmazd forms his own Light, this Creation, the Archangels, and the celestial Wisdom. And in this book the figure of Destiny—Fatum (*bakhsh*)—shines through the figure of Zervān.<sup>32</sup>

A short Mazdean treatise in Persian, a polemic against the doctors of Islam (whence its title: '*Ōlamā-ye Islām*'<sup>33</sup>), is still more precise, for the author himself seems to profess the Zervanite doctrine. "In the religion of Zarathustra," he writes, "it is revealed that with the exception of Time all the rest is creature, while Time itself is the Creator."<sup>34</sup> It first produced Fire and Water; when they were joined, Ohrmazd became existent. It is noteworthy that the eternal birth of the personal being of Ohrmazd results here from the conjunction of those two elements which in Hermeticism are the symbol par excellence of the alchemical operation taken as the generation of divine mankind.<sup>35</sup> Ohrmazd, wholly luminous, pure and fragrant, perceives his redoubtable Adversary in the depths of the abyss. He is filled with surprise and alarm. He ponders how to set in motion forces which may defeat him, and he creates the "time of long duration,"<sup>36</sup> amounting to

31 On this book cf. W. Geiger and E. Kuhn, *Grundriss der Iranischen Philologie* (Strassburg, 1895-1904), Vol. II, pp. 107-8; on the form of the words of the title see Nyberg, "Questions," I, pp. 242-46; cf. principally the text, p. 198. Plastically speaking, Zervān, exempt from old age, imaged in created Time as a youth, resembles the "Ancient of Days" only very remotely.

32 Nyberg, "Questions," II, p. 54.

33 There are two different Persian recensions: cf. Dhabhar, *Rivayats*, pp. 437-57, and Junker, "Iranische Quellen," pp. 143ff.

34 In agreement with Junker, "Iranische Quellen," p. 143, li. 33-34, we must correct the following text (corresponding to *Rivayats*, p. 450, and to the edition, p. 81, li. 8): "There is no one we may call its Creator since it was not made by him who is himself Creation" (and not "because it had not yet made the Creation").

35 The alchemic doctrines of those who have been called the "Hellenized Magi" (Ostanes etc.) are already partially known. But little consideration seems to have been given to the alchemic doctrine implied in Zoroastrian orthodoxy. It is held, for example, that if the Ahrimanic smoke mingled with the Fire, it did not combine with its luminosity, whose antagonist it was (so that pure and purifying Fire could not be the substance of Hell). "Ōhrmazd's creatures (Water and Fire for example) cannot destroy one another." Cf. de Menasce, *Shkand-Gumānik Vicar*, p. 36. Beings of the same essence form pairs and are complementary, but not so Light and Darkness, which are contradictory. And this is capital. Cf. also Hertel, *Die Awestischen Herrschafts- und Siegesfeuer*, index, s.v. *Gewässer*.

36 As we must read with Dhabhar, *Rivayats*, p. 451. Junker, "Iranische Quellen," pp. 143-44, has unfortunately read the exact opposite, and the schema becomes unintelligible.

twelve millennia, which is manifested in the celestial Sphere, constellated by the twelve signs of the zodiac.<sup>37</sup>

So far the drama has resulted from the clash between the Power of Light (aided by Zervān or subordinated to him) and a Contrary Power which is wholly external, as in pure Mazdaism. But now this clash is conceived as a drama within the supreme deity himself, because in the *person* of Zervan this supreme godhead contains both the elevation of Light and the depth of Darkness. This then is the vision of integral Zervanism. Its schema has been transmitted to us by Christian sources, notably by the Armenian writer Eznik. It need not surprise us that polemical considerations have dispelled every trace of great mythical inspiration and introduced a certain element of the ridiculous.<sup>38</sup>

Before anything existed, the heavens or the earth or any creation—the Magi are made to say in these texts—Zervān existed. And from the outset the name of Zervān holds a twofold meaning: that of Destiny (*bakhsh*) with which we are already familiar, and that other meaning, no less fraught with consequences, of celestial Glory or Light (*xvarr*), the keystone of Mazdean theosophy. It is further related that for one millennium Zervan performed sacrifices in order that a son might be born to him, a son who

37 Dhabhar, *Rivayats*, p. 451. Cf. *Mēnōkē Xrat* in "Questions," I, p. 198 (two last paragraphs); p. 214 (last four lines). I disregard the question as to which of the two figures, nine or twelve millennia, is of Zervanite rather than Mazdean origin. Concerning the difficulty created by the recognized Ahrimanian nature (in *Menoke Xrat*) of the "seven" planets (thus including the sun and the moon, though they belong to Ōhrmazd's initial Creation), cf. Nyberg, "Questions," II, pp. 62–65, and the sketch on Iranian astrology given by de Menasce, *Shkand-Gumānik Vicar*, pp. 45–49. The usual type of explanation with which too many students content themselves (degradation of gods as a result of the political circumstances attendant on an encounter between two religions) really misses the essential point, as Hans Jonas remarked in *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist* (Göttingen, 1934), Vol. I, pp. 29–31. As for the twelve signs of the zodiac considered as twelve generals (Pahlavi *spāhbat*) on the side of Ohrmazd (and the seven planets as seven generals on the side of Ahriman), it should be noted that in the Ismailian Nāsir-e Khosraw the seven Enunciatory Prophets, respectively inaugurating each of the seven periods of a cycle, are also "generals" commissioned by the prime Intelligence (*Jāmī' al-Hikmatain*, p. 121).

38 Cf. the texts in Nyberg, "Questions," II, pp. 71ff.; Bidez and Cumont, *Les Mages hellénisés*, Vol. II, pp. 88ff.; the text of the Xestorian monk Iohannan bar Penkayē, ed. de Menasce, "Autour d'un texte syriaque inédit de la religion des Mages," *Bulletin of The School of Oriental Studies*, IX (1937–39), 537–61. Cf. also Junker, pp. 142–43. This myth has been called puerile mythology, a gross and primitive myth. Whatever may be the responsibility of Eznik and the other Christian writers, one thing is certain: it is impossible to see why "spiritualization" must necessarily set in at the end of a long "evolution," and why an "evolution" might not equally well bring about the degradation of a so-called "primitive" spirituality.

would be called Ohrmazd and who would be the Creator of the Heavens and the earth. But then a doubt arose in Zervān's mind: is this solitary liturgy not in vain? Is it effective? Would Ohrmazd, the child of his thought and his desire, really be born? And then, from this thought *and* this doubt, two beings were conceived: one was Ohrmazd, child of his liturgical act, the other Ahriman, the child of the Shadow, of the Darkness of his doubt. But at first Zervan knew only that they were two and vowed that he would bestow the sacerdotal kingdom upon the first one to appear.

This vow was known to Ohrmazd; with the loyalty and simplicity of a being of Light, he informed Ahriman, who by himself, with his "retarded knowledge," would have known nothing. No sooner did he learn this than he found a way of being born prematurely, as it were, and appeared before his father (who was also his mother).<sup>39</sup> Zervan asked him: "Who art thou?" "I am thy son." And the enraged Zervan replied: "My son is fragrant and luminous, thou art dark and foul-smelling." And now Ohrmazd, born in due time, presented himself luminous and fragrant to Zervān, who realized at once that this was his son, for whom he had performed long liturgical rites. He wished to invest him with the royal priesthood and gave him his blessing. But Ahriman intervened and reminded Zervan of his vow. In order not to break the vow, Zervan resolved on a compromise: "O false, maleficent one, to thee will be given a reign of 9,000 years, and Ohrmazd will be sovereign over thee.<sup>40</sup> After 9,000 years, Ohrmazd will reign, and all that he desires to do, that he will do."

Thus the dominant theme of Zervanism imposes a thesis which would be intolerable to pure Zoroastrian Mazdaism: the primogeniture of Ahriman. Still more serious, Ahriman is the prince of this world and his reign is legitimate, since Zervan, to avoid breaking his vow, was himself compelled to confer the kingship upon him. Ohrmazd is sovereign, to be sure, but he does not reign; he will reign only at the end of this aeon, at the end of the 9,000 years. The cycle of the millennia is not even imposed by Ōhrmazd himself as in the Mazdean dramaturgy. It is decided upon by Zervan as a

39 The *Bundahishn* also declares that Ohrmazd "acquired the position of father and mother of Creation" ("Questions," I, p. 221). Another opinion, however, attributes to Ohrmazd and Ahriman a celestial mother named *Xvashizag* (an affectionate diminutive, signifying roughly "she who is wholly beautiful"), a kind of Iranian Venus *Urania*, as Nyberg says: "Questions," II, p. 83.

40 Concerning this translation, cf. the important note in Nyberg, "Questions," II, p. 73, n. 1.



compromise, because, to eliminate the Shadow, the Darkness engendered by his doubt, he must agree to limit himself: limited time, our aeon, the time of our world, is the repentance of Zervān the Eternal.

The dialectic of Yes and No thus introduced into the godhead brings forth a cosmogony comparable to that which Schelling set out to develop speculatively in his sketch on the Ages of the World.<sup>41</sup> Here likewise the contradiction of Yes and No, introduced into eternity itself, shatters eternity and sets a series of eternities or aeons in place of a single one. Eternity resolves into time.<sup>42</sup> It is in this contradiction that the succession of the "Ages of the world" originates. The cycle of Ahriman will be followed by a new aeon, that of Ohrmazd. Similarly in the Ismailian theosophy it is the two phases, the Light and Darkness of the Angel who is the demiurge of our cosmos, which will motivate the alternation of cycles of epiphany and occultation.<sup>43</sup> The eschatological resolution of the present aeon, it is true, is similar in Zervanism and in pure Mazdaism; it is the elimination of the Power of Darkness. But infinite Time, detached from Ohrmazd and rising above him on the horizon of all the creatures of Light, is also a whole new archetypal zone, which now, together with this Infinite, stretches out immeasurably.

We have already mentioned the Mazdean concept of the Fravartis (*fravashifarvahar, ferouër*), celestial archetypes of the creatures of Light,<sup>44</sup> acting as the tutelary angels of earthly creatures. Ohrmazd revealed to his prophet that without their aid and support he would be unable to defend his Creation against Ahriman's assault.<sup>45</sup> Now the episode of a pre-existential choice is at the root of the whole Mazdean anthropology and assuredly provides the clearest motive for the naming of these feminine archetypal

41 Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, tr. F. de W. Bolman, jr. (New York, 1942). In this work the religion of the Magi is referred to (pp. 102, 159, 173).

42 *Ibid.*, p. 137. It must be noted that Mazdaism aspires not to a new beginning but to a restoration of all things, a return to the original state, an ἀποκαταστασις. But we also find (cf. below in the myth developed by Dion), tied up with the religion of the Magi, explicit mention of the idea of an indefinite succession of cycles (cf. below in Ismailism the succession of the cycles tending toward the final restoration, the Grand Resurrection).

43 With this difference, that the first cycle is a cycle of Light, not a cycle of Ahrimanic domination. Even though Darkness here has its origin in a being of Light, this being is no longer the supreme godhead. Cf. below, pp. 134ff., and Part 2.

44 Cf. a summary account in M. X. Dhalla, *History of Zoroastrianism* (New York, 1938), pp. 232-43, 375-78.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 238, and Yasht, XIII, 12, 13, 28, 76, etc. H. W. Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems in the Ninth-Century Books* (Oxford, 1943), p. 143.

entities as "those who have chosen." <sup>46</sup> In the prologue of the millennia belonging to the period of Mixture, Ohrmazd confronted the Fravartis of human beings with a free choice, which is at the origin of their *destiny*, that is to say, their Time, their Aeon: either they might dwell in heaven, safe from the ravages of Ahriman, or they might descend and be incarnated in material bodies in order to combat Ahriman in the earthly world.<sup>47</sup> The Fravartis elect to join battle on earth. And now a kind of duplication occurs. In the end the incarnated Fravarti is identified with the soul; but this soul does not cease to possess an archetypal dimension, since its celestial condition was to *be* an archetype. It is in point of fact only the "person" and earthly part of a Whole, of a syzygy, completed by a celestial Person, another "self" which is its Destiny, the Angel-Soul, the celestial Self, which comes to meet it after death on the road to the Cinvat Bridge, which is accordingly referred to in the texts as "the Soul on the road,"<sup>48</sup> and which calls itself Daēnā.

A whole chivalric ethic hangs from this conception.<sup>49</sup> To lose this archetypal dimension is literally to cease to have an angel, it is to die as a soul can die: to cease to answer for one's celestial partner, which can then no longer answer for its earthly soul. Ohrmazd is not an all-powerful god imposing a Law, imposing trials and sufferings to which one submits without understanding. He is one whose companions share his combat, whose suffering they assume, and whom they do not betray. In the Zervanite ethics the Fravartis are no longer merely the knights of Ohrmazd but are his suffering members, those in whom "he endures affliction,"<sup>50</sup> because here Ohrmazd assumes the features of the active and suffering God, foreshadowing the primordial Man of Manichaeism.

But beyond this there is a surprising feature—to which philosophical reflection, which ought to draw its consequences, seems to have devoted little attention. The Mazdean ontology of the celestial archetypes accords

46 Cf. other etymologies, in Bailey, pp. 107ff.

47 Text of the Bundahishn, Bailey, p. 108; and "Questions," I, pp. 236-37.

48 Cf. Dhabhar, *Rivayats*, p. 511 (*Saddar Bundeheeshi*, ch. X, verse 9; *ravan-e rah*). Cf. Bailey, p. 115 (*den = ruvan i rās*). I shall have more to say of this central question later.

49 As Eugenio d'Ors says in commenting on the Avestan idea of the angel, "the Zoroastrian religion is translated into a sort of order of chivalry." *Introducción a la vida angelica* (Buenos Aires, 1941), p. 111.

50 "*anākih . . . dit*." Cf. the just remarks of Nyberg, "Questions," II, pp. 80, 81. Ohrmazd's creatures (and the same is true of Ahriman and his counter-creatures) are his "members"; they stand in a kind of *unio mystica* with him who has formed them, but the essence of Ohrmazd as such is inaccessible to evil.

to each of them a Fravarti: the Archangels (Amerta Spanta), the Angels (Yazata, Izad) have each their Fravarti. More important still, Ohrmazd himself has his Fravarti.<sup>51</sup> But this "Angel of Ohrmazd" cannot then be like the Angel of Yahweh who stands before His Face and manifests Him to His creatures. Rather, it is the Angel who goes ahead of him because he reveals him to himself and manifests to him the horizon, the eternal advent of unlimited Zervān. Thus the archetypes have in turn their Angels, and Ohrmazd himself, who conceived them as conscious and active Powers, also has his own archetypal Archangel—but this extraordinary intuition projecting the archetypes into a new archetypal dimension is intelligible only if this dimension opens up a *distance* and a distention within eternity itself. Then Ohrmazd's being must not be an immutable and immobile existence, the pure act of the rational theodicies, but must be projected into the dimension of an eternal future. His Angel stands in the same relation to Ohrmazd as Daēnā (the aeon) to the human being (the incarnate Fravarti), who—eschatologically speaking—attains to his angel only to be drawn with him into a new height, as though a new archetypal Archangel forever preceded their syzygy. Ohrmazd and all the beings of the celestial universe are drawn into the ascending movement of limitless eternities toward horizons and toward creative acts of thought belonging to universes still in-formulable. Here then we may speak of a "Gothic style" of cosmology. In this sense the Zervanite horizon, that of absolute Time without shore, without origin, and without end, would truly be in keeping with the Mazdean universe of those archetypal Archangels who, far from being "fixed," multiply beyond themselves, always sending out another Angel ahead of themselves.

Still there remains something in the schema of integral Zervanism that cannot be reduced to the needs of uncompromising Mazdaism. In the Zer-

51 On the Fravartis of the Archangels cf. Yasht, XIII, 82-84; in Vendidad, XIX, 46-48, Zarathustra is enjoined to invoke the Fravarti of Ahura Mazda (cf. Yasht, XIII, 80). Unfortunately Dhalla's article "Ahura Mazda's Fravashi" (Fravarti) in *Indo-Iranian Studies in Honour of Darab Sanjana* (London, 1925), pp. 115-16, does not go to the bottom of the question. Here we are approaching an archetypal structure. The Parsee theologian J. J. Modi, referring to a vision of Catherine Emmerich, makes an allusion to what he calls Christ's "Fravarti"—cf. his *Dante Papers* (Bombay, 1914), 7: "Angelology," pp. 157-58. On the other hand we know the close relations in the ancient Church between Angelos Christos and the Archangel Michael. Cf. Hans Söderberg, *La Religion des Cathares* (Uppsala, 1949), pp. 77ff. (cf. also n. 9, above; and below, n. 55, and Part 2, p. 155, n. 47).

vanite dramaturgy there remains an ambiguity capable of compromising that prodigious infinite *clan*, an ambiguity capable of beguiling the incarnated Fravartis into a betrayal that will deprive them of their dimension of Light. For Ahriman is the legitimate prince of this world; moreover, although he is a Power of Darkness, this Darkness is an aspect of the supreme godhead itself. To affirm this world is assuredly to serve the Power of Darkness, but is it not also to serve the godhead which itself gave birth to this Darkness and made of this time the time of its wrath, of its renunciation of being itself? And such indeed seems to be the secret of the nocturnal cult which, according to Plutarch, certain Magi devoted to Ahriman. Thus the effort to surmount radical dualism ends by establishing the Darkness as the norm of the Day; what was the "Day of the Angel" is inverted into the "Day of Ahriman." In order that the dawn of Resurrection may shine upon the night of this false day, in order that the day which will be the negation of this negation may grow, the Zervanite schema must undergo certain dramaturgical alterations. Unlike Zervanized Mazdaism or Mazdeanized Zervanism, integral Zervanism may be preserved in an aspect of its essential idea, the idea of a unity mediating between the duality of Light and Darkness; but on condition that this unity shall cease to be at the level of the supreme godhead and regress to an ontologically subsequent rank.

#### DRAMATURGICAL ALTERATIONS

Here unfortunately we can speak of these dramaturgical changes only briefly, to the degree in which they prepare us for the periods and cycles of the Ismaili mythohistory.

The alterations of the Zervanite dramaturgy are attested by Greek and Islamic sources. In his thirty-sixth oration, Dion of Prusa has transmitted the famous myth of the chariot of the Magi, which seems to have come from a psalter belonging to Magi celebrating the mysteries of Mithras, and which might be compared to the famous vision of Ezekiel. The chariot is harnessed to four chargers typifying the elements, consecrated to the four gods which they respectively represent. One of them is endowed with wings and is of a beauty and splendor surpassing the apparent animal nature of its myth; it is the soul of the invisible guide, and it is forever in movement through all the periods that follow one upon another unceasingly throughout the eternities. In it we may recognize Ohrmazd as the soul of Zervān

(as he will be in Manichaeism), and here again Zervan is expressly identified with eternal Wisdom.<sup>52</sup>

In mentioning the astonishing Magian rite to which we shall refer below, Plutarch introduces a new figure among the *dramatis personae*: Mithras the mediator. Here a new Zervanite tetrad is presupposed: Zervān, Ohrmazd, Ahriman, Mithras.<sup>53</sup>

It is precisely this idea of a mediator that is emphasized in the account of Zervanism given us by Shahrastānī (12th century), the estimable Persian historian of religions. It is this idea which radically alters the schema of integral Zervanism and puts an end to all ambiguity in its anthropology and ethics. Darkness and Light do not confront each other from the very origin in an irreducible dualism, but are born from the same being, who makes Time "temporalize" itself—an eminently Zervanite idea. Yet this being, the superior and mediating unity in which the contraries originate, is no longer the absolute original godhead. Zervan is one of the beings of Light, the greatest among the angels; thus there is a shift, a regression of the level at which duality—and with it cyclic time—bursts forth. The object of Zervān's doubt is expressed in more metaphysical terms than in Eznik's myth: "Perhaps this universe is nothing," or than in the words of those whom Shahrastam calls the Gayomartians (from Gayōmart, the primordial Anthropos): "If I had an adversary, what would he be like?"<sup>54</sup> Here we

52 Cf. Nyberg, "Questions," II, pp. 91-99 (recalling *Phaedrus* 246D-249D, the winged chariots of Zeus and the gods, the race of the souls); Bidez and Cumont, *Les Mages hellénisés*, Vol. I, pp. 91ff., and Vol. II, pp. 142ff.; F. Cumont, *Textes et monuments figures relatifs aux mystères de Mithra* (Brussels, 1899), Vol. II, pp. 60-64 (cf. another exemplification of the myth of the chariot applied to the Angel Sraosha, in Yasna, LVI, 27-29). The chariot of the Magi has inspired comparisons with the celebrated vision of Ezekiel, which is the origin of the Jewish mysticism of the Merkabah; cf. Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums*, pp. 355-57; Reitzenstein, *Das Iranische Erlösungsmysterium*, pp. 246ff.

53 *De Iside et Osiride*, 46-47. Cf. Benveniste, *The Persian Religion*, ch. 4 (above, n. 8), especially pp. 89ff.; Nyberg, *Die Religionen*, pp. 392ff. On the Zervanite tetrads see "Questions," II, pp. 108ff.

54 Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-milal* (lithographed, Teheran, 1288 A.H.), pp. 113-14. I do not think that we should go too far in denying the historical reality of this sect (R. Reitzenstein and H. Schaeder, *Studien zum antiken Synkretismus aus Iran und Griechenland* (Leipzig, 1926), pp. 236-39). True, the sect of the Gayomartians is attested only by Shahrastam, but nothing proves to us that he did not possess data which are no longer at our disposal. Though his effort at systematization is indeed discernible, his exegesis is itself a historical fact. Among the Gayomartians the Angel Zervān al-kabīr (Zervān the Great) of Shahrastānī's Zervanites does not appear. It is Ohrmazd himself (Yazdān) who by his doubt engenders his Antagonist. The mediating role of the angels is similar among the Zervanites and the Gayomartians (note

have the fascination of the void, and the thought of the Other, a thought which as such engenders that Other, so unleashing a combat in heaven which will endure for three millennia. It is, then, the angels as a whole who here fulfill the function of Mithras or of the Archangel Michael, and their mediating role permits us to recognize also their features in those of the Angel Metatron, who dominates so great a part of the mystical literature of the Jews.<sup>55</sup> In the account of Shahrastānī, the angels decree for Ahriman a time of seven millennia, during which the world will be given over to him, but at the end of which he will be compelled to return it to the Light.<sup>56</sup>

We shall see that in the Ismaili schema of mythohistory the angel corresponding to the Angel Zervān not only is the mediator who gives rise to Light and Darkness as well as their respective cycles, but also is the mediator of the victory over Darkness, the mediator of his own victory over himself. To this victory all his companions, made in his image, must contribute, his companions whose archetype he is; this they must do by undertaking in turns a combat punctuated by heptads of millennia. In concluding his account of the angelic mediation, Shahrastam recalls the fundamental episode of the Fravartīs' choice and of their descent to earth. Here the combat of the Archangel Michael has its parallel not in the idea of a "fall of the angels" (never, in Mazdean terms, can an angel, *Izad,fereshta*, be "evil"), but in a voluntary descent, a voluntary renunciation of the Abode of Light, in favor of the perilous combat on earth. And a similar angelological structure will be formulated in the Ismaili anthropology.

## TIME AS A PERSONAL ARCHETYPE

The episode of the descent of man's Fravartīs to earth is thus both the consequence and the signal of the *shift* of eternal Time into limited time. Very opportunely Shahrastam mentions this at the end of his account of modified Zervanism. And I believe that it is by concentrating our attention

that among the latter the motif of the descent of the Fravartīs appears explicitly).

55 Cf. H. Odeberg, *3 Enoch or the Hebrew Book of Enoch* (Cambridge, 1928), pp. 131-33 (cf. above, n. 9, n. 51). It is not so much the historical derivations that are to be sought here; there will never be a decisive solution. To explore the meaning of an archetype's recurrence is in itself a sufficient and satisfying task.

56 I do not believe that the figure of seven millennia (instead of nine or twelve) is due to a copyist's error. It is no accident that this figure accords precisely with the Ismaili schema and the astrological correspondences of the Great Cycle.

upon this motif that we in turn shall best be able to gain an intimation of how eternal Time can be apprehended as a celestial Person, and what experience of time in its twofold aspect is expressed in this personalization. Let us briefly recall certain of our initial findings: every creature is composed of his earthly part and of his celestial counterpart, his archetype or angel. Hence through every reality it is possible to discern a person—that is, to grasp this reality *as* or *in* its celestial person. The fractions of time (months, days, hours) may themselves be visualized as persons (angels and archangels whose names they bear and who are their *event*). This relation to their angel constitutes precisely their archetypal dimension; it is this relation that makes it possible to apprehend them as a complete Whole and thereby to apprehend them as Persons. This norm applies *a fortiori* to the Fravarti incarnated as an earthly human soul whose celestial counterpart is the Soul of Light or Angel which it encounters "on the way" to the Cinvat Bridge, which separates the two universes. Thus the visualization not only of all reality as a person but also of that person as transcendent and celestial depends essentially on the archetypal dimension constituted by the relation with the angel, a new "dimension of Light" which determines the entire structure of the Mazdean ontology.

Let us keep in mind this fundamental norm in seeking to follow the chain of relations that confronts us here. Not only do the fractions of time appear as celestial Persons—that is to say, as eternal individuations—but absolute Time itself, eternal Time, appears in multiple personal Figures: Zervan, eternal Time, is a sovereign; he is Wisdom-Daēnā; Zervan is Destiny; Zervan is Light and Glory, as we learn in the myth recorded by Eznik. Moreover, the Greek equivalents of these Iranian notions tend to fix the play of transpartitions upon the vision of a determinate figure, namely that of the *Agathos Daimōn*—that is to say, upon a figure which in every case becomes the tutelary angel or celestial *paredros*. The transpartition corresponds to that which in Zervan gives us an intimation of Daena, and in Daena of the celestial Self. And it is precisely this insistent and precise transpartition which should enable us to ask with some hope of an answer: what mode of existence and experience is presupposed by the apparition (the phenomenon) of eternal Time as a personal figure, tending to become fixated in the form of the angel which is the celestial *paredros* and as such the archetype, the guide, and the destiny of life? This form of angel-*paredros* also signifies a totality that is consummated only by the conjunction of

the earthly person and of the celestial Self which *is* its superior existence. Until the incarnated Fravarti is joined, upon her return, with the Angel who comes to meet her "on the road" to Činvat Bridge—up to this moment the earthly soul is lacking, it lags behind itself—that is, behind the totality of its being. In short, we are led to this conclusion: the visualization of eternal Time as of a person identifying himself with the archetypal Person of every earthly individual signifies literally that in compensation limited earthly time, the time Ōhrmazd needs in order to expel Ahriman from his Creation, in short the time that we ourselves are in (for us earthly creatures "time" pure and simple)—this time is *retarded eternity*.<sup>57</sup> That is why in the Angel's annunciation after death—"I am thy Daēnā"—we were able to perceive the equivalent of "I am thine Eternity."

At this point let us consolidate our general statements and illustrate them by examples. There are numerous texts that might enlighten us. But I shall be brief, condensing the themes as much as possible.

1. A first series of examples tends to show the epiphany of eternal Time as essentially multiform—that is to say, it shows the *Αἰών* as *παντόμορφος θεός*.<sup>58</sup> Not only does this modality provide a foundation for its numerous epiphanies; it also makes possible the exegetic transition leading the being from the hypostasis as such to the being in its function. It is thanks to this multiformity that eternal Time can in each instance manifest itself as an archetypal Figure, for this precisely is what assures its presence in that "instance." The idea of a unity which is the unity of each member of a Whole and also that of their totality may also be verified in connection with the archangelical heptad in Mazdaism, and in the earliest Christianity as well.<sup>59</sup> This idea makes possible a simultaneity of divine unity and divine plurality which avoids the simplest dilemma between monotheism and poly-

57 The term is that of Nédoncelle.

58 Cf. Reitzenstein, *Das Iranische Erlösungsmysterium*, pp. 172ff.

59 On the origins of this Iranian method of enumeration (which always considers the totality as a new unity added to the number of members composing it) cf. Reitzenstein, *Das Iranische Erlösungsmysterium*, pp. 154ff., and Nyberg, "Questions," II, pp. 54ff. This is by no means a naive logic; cf. the remarks of Junker, "Iranische Quellen," pp. 160–61. Cf. also the Christian inscription at Miletus, where each of the seven archangel aeons is *also* the Whole (Deissmann in Reitzenstein, p. 175, n. 2; *ibid.*, Christ as *auriga cherubim*; and cf. above, n. 52, the myth of the chariot). Also see Reitzenstein, "Eine frühchristliche Schrift von den dreierlei Früchten des christlichen Lebens," in *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* (Giessen), XV (1914), in which Christ is at the same time the sum of the seven Angels and one of them (pp. 67–68, 82).



theism. This might be an occasion to redefine the old term of "kathenotheism" as the hierophantic category of "every instance."<sup>60</sup> This means that given the figure in which the transpartitions of the aeon tend to become fixated, the mode of existence of the soul for which eternal Time is epiphanized as a figure that is its archetypal dimension culminates neither in the void of its own isolation nor in a uniformly nameable divine presence, but in a rigorous and irreplaceable individuation (*καθ' ενα, singulatum*) of that divine presence.

The epiphanies of the aeon assume this aspect of an eternal individuation which is always a totality. We might conceive a predetermined number of such epiphanies, but each is multiplied in turn. There are, for example, the celestial archetypes or personal figures of the divisions of the Mazdean year, typifying personal creative powers. We find examples of a similar mental iconography in the Gnostic, Nosayrī, and Ismaili calendars;<sup>61</sup> in Manichaeism; and finally, we have the twelve maidens, Virtues, or "Majesties"—the "twelve glorious maidens of Zervān"—a mystery which in the twelve hours of Light leads the soul from earth to perfect Light. But in addition Time itself as an eternal totality is epiphanized in individuated figures, whose play of reciprocal transpartitions are fixated in a figure which may enable us to define the mode of existence for which eternal Time announces itself in this manner.<sup>62</sup>

Zervan is eternal Wisdom: Zervan is Destiny (*bakhsh*) as an elected and imparted finality, leading back to itself (personal destiny or finality which is something other than what is popularly called fatalism). In his capacity of Destiny and personal Destiny, Zervan also appears as *xvarr* (Avestan *xvarenah*)—that is to say, as the celestial Light of Glory, the "fire of vic-

60 Cf. Betty Heimann, *Indian and Western Philosophy, a Study in Contrasts* (London, 1937), pp. 37ff. And this is not a problem peculiar to India.

61 Cf. R. Reitzenstein, *Poimandres* (Leipzig, 1904), p. 270, and our study, "Rituel sabéen et exégèse smaélienne," *EJ* 1950, pp. 235ff.

62 Cf. E. Waldschmidt and W. Lentz, *Die Stellung Jesu im Manichäismus* (Berlin, 1926), p. 127; Reitzenstein, *Das Iranische Erlösungsmysterium*, pp. 154–59; de Menasce, p. 255. On the three greatest periods of cosmic Time represented in three figures forming a unity we may compare (for the archetype) Gayōmart, Zarathustra, Saoshyant (Reitzenstein, pp. 99, 242); Nuriel, Enoch, Metatron (Odeberg, 3 *Enoch*, p. 124); primordial Man, Archangel Michael, and Christ (Söderberg, *La Religion des Cathares*, p. 78). In the Ismaili theosophy the seven Imāms of the seven periods of a cycle epiphanize the essence of a unique and eternal Imam (cf., in Manichaeism, Adam, Seth, Enoch, Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus, and Mani).

tory" which is primarily the property of the celestial Yazatas.<sup>63</sup> This Glory was visibly manifested as a nimbus and flame forming haloes round the heads of the princes of dynasties consecrated prior to our chronologies; it still retains this visibility in the stylized nimbus which accompanies it from the figure of the Mazdean Saoshyant to the Western representations of Christ, to the Eastern figures of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. But it is not only the royal and sacerdotal charisma; it is the power which constitutes and knits together the existence of a being of Light. In this sense, this "Glory" signifies the soul itself insofar as it exists before the body.<sup>64</sup> Henceforth, if this Light of Glory, figure of eternal Time, is imparted to every being of Light as its very soul, we shall be justified in calling it the Destiny and Eternity of that being.

It should be mentioned that these alternating denominations in which we glimpse the Figure of Zervan in the myth recorded by Eznik were given precise Greek equivalents: Δόξα and Τύχη.<sup>65</sup> And the fact that this Light of Glory, which is also Destiny, was represented by the term Τύχη is of the greatest importance. For in the same context the figure Τύχη (fate, destiny) was identified with the figure which dominates the Hermetic horizon, *Agathos Daimōn*, who appears simultaneously as a Hermetic divinity and as the personal "good daemon," the δαίμων πάρεδρος, the celestial *paredros* or partner—that is to say, the helping, tutelary angel—a gratuitous gift obtained by prayer.<sup>66</sup>

In whatever sense we consider it, we perceive a figure with increasingly precise traits. On the one hand, Daēnā is Zervān and she is also the Angel-Self, the celestial archetype coming to meet the soul. In the *Corpus hermeticum* Sophia is the aeon; she is the mother of Anthropos—that is to say,

63 Cf. Gray, *Foundations*, pp. 120-23; Spiegel, *Erânische Alterthumskunde*, Vol. II, pp. 42-44; Hertel, *Die Awestischen Herrschafts- und Siegesfeier*, pp. VIII, XIII., 12, 76.

64 Cf. Reitzenstein and Schaeder, *Studien*, p. 230, n. 2; pp. 17, 321; p. 320 (Iranian *xarenah* and Hebrew *shekhina*).

65 Cumont, *Textes et monuments*, Vol. I, pp. 284-85; Bidez and Cumont, *Les Mages hellénisés*, Vol. I, pp. 68ff.; Vol. II, pp. 52, n. 5; 87; 89; 92, n. 2; Nyberg, "Questions," II, p. 71, and ch. 5, pp. 66-67. In the Pahlavi script, *xarr* (glory) is represented by the Aramaic ideogram *gaddeh* (fortune, luck): Gray, *Foundations*, pp. 121, 128; it reappears in Ismailism under the Arabic form of *jadd* = Persian *bakht* in Abu Ya'kūb Sejestāni (*Mawāzīn*, XII, and below, Part 2, p. 150, n. 27) characterizing the angel identified with Gabriel, who would correspond topologically to Zervan.

66 Cf. Reitzenstein, *Das Iranische Erlösungsmysterium*, pp. 192-93 (also p. 191, n. 1; and *Poimandres*, p. 18, n. 8; Agathoel, angel of victory and of rejoicing); *Corpus hermeticum*, text established by A. D. Nock and tr. A.-J. Festugière (Paris, 1945-54; 4 vols.), Vol. I, Treatise X, 22-23, and n. 78.

of the regenerated *mystes*, for she has given birth to his immortal body, *ἀθάνατον σῶμα*.<sup>67</sup> But in addition, the assurance of immortality is bound up with the attainment of the *daimon paredros*, the celestial angel or partner. At the same time, Zervān is *Τύχη*, Personal Destiny; *Τύχη* is *Agathos Daimon*, who is a divine figure as such and also a *daimon paredros*, the personal angel of each soul.<sup>68</sup>

2. Now it is by this figure of the *daimon paredros* that we may finally understand the characteristic mode of being of a soul for which time is epiphany as a person. If all the transpirations or hierophanies of eternal Time tend to be fixated in this person, it is because the soul for which it is thus modalized has taken cognizance of its archetypal dimension and knows that the totality of its being can be fulfilled only in conjunction with its celestial *paredros*. But at the same time we perceive the "transitive" way in which a godhead, without ceasing to be in itself a hypostasis, can exist totally in each of its individuations; this is the case with the figures of the Mazdean angelology, such as the *agathos daimon*, which is also a *daimōn paredros*, etc.

To this structure corresponds exactly that of the soul which exemplifies it, the being whose archetype this godhead is. So it is that the same name will designate the angelic hypostasis in itself and its presence in its earthly counterpart considered as a part or potency of it and revealing precisely its dual structure, its reference to the angel or celestial archetype. In Mazdaism, for example, *fravarti* (*farvahr*) and *daena* (*den*) are celestial entities and human potencies or faculties as well; more precisely they are that part of human beings which enables them to be coupled with these celestial entities. Similarly in Hermeticism the *Nous* is at once a god, the faculty of intuitive knowledge in man, and his tutelary angel (as *Agathos Daimōn*).<sup>69</sup> Here we do not have two inconsistent theories, but the dimension of an anthropology which is already an angelology: "the man without *Nous*" means the man deprived of that faculty of knowledge and precisely the "man without an angel," in short something which is no longer a human being.<sup>70</sup> But, on the other hand, to attain to the *angelos paredros* is to gain immortality,<sup>71</sup> to become aeon; and similarly the meeting with Daena "on

67 *Ibid.*, XI, 3; Vol. II, XIII, 2. Cf. n. 2 of Vol. II, p. 268. Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 44; *Das Iranische Erlösungsmysterium*, p. 44. Junker, "Iranische Quellen," p. 164.

68 Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 153; 156, n. 2; 365.

69 *Corpus hermeticum*, Vol. I, p. 134, n. 73, and p. 139.

70 *Ibid.*, X, 24, and p. 139 (bottom). 71 Cf. above, n. 68.

the road" to the Cinvat Bridge signifies the shift of limited time to eternal Time; the attainment of Destiny itself and the plenitude of the Light of Glory or *xvarenah*.

Thus it is only by anticipation that the soul can now be granted a vision of its eternal Time in the form of its Angel-Archetype; and this prevision, by showing the soul what it is *not yet* but has still to be, reveals to it its own being as "retarded eternity." In consequence, anticipation is the vital law of an existence which, by thus understanding itself, must tend toward its superexistence on pain of being *eternally retarded* over against itself. This anticipation is manifested in rites and injunctions, in the enchantments of a mental iconography or of ecstatic visions.

The symbolism of the *kosti* has rightly been interpreted in this sense.<sup>72</sup> The *kosti* is the sacred cord, woven of lamb's wool, which the Zoroastrians wear as a girdle and which is venerated as their distinctive religious sign. The cord is passed three times around the waist and knotted four times, twice in front and twice behind. The symbolic significance traditionally attached to these four knots makes it possible to identify them as a Zervanite tetrad to which, as in the myth of the "chariot of the Magi," is added a fifth member which fastens together and totalizes the tetrad; but here precisely Zervān or Wisdom, the invisible *auriga* of the chariot, is represented by the very person of the Mazdean believer. In this sense the symbolism of the *kosti* approaches the symbolism of the robe in which the *mystes* was clad: the *stola olympiaca* of which Apuleius speaks,<sup>73</sup> or the heavenly robe constellated with the signs of the zodiac, mentioned in the mysteries of Mithras, which was such that when the *mystes* donned it he in person became the god passing through the constellations.<sup>74</sup>

It is likewise as an injunction to abolish the delay, to convert retarded eternity into anticipated eternity that we may understand the solemn announcement of the *Nous* to Hermes: "If you do not make yourself like

72 Cf. Junker, "Iranische Quellen," pp. 136, and 160, n. 36; Modi, *Religious Ceremonies*, pp. 178-79. It should also be noted that the third knot itself refers to the sacrosanct Zoroastrian trilogy: "Good thought, good word, good action," projected spatially as forming the three levels of paradise: *Humat, Hūxt, Huvarsh* (*Mēnōkē Xrat*, II, 145; LVII, 13).

73 Reitzenstein, *Das Iranische Erlösungsmysterium*, p. 167.

74 *Ibid.*, pp. 168, 239. Cf. also the motif of the heavenly girdle brocaded on the robe donned by the *mystes*, in Junker, "Iranische Quellen," p. 162: the *kosti* makes the Zoroastrian believer a symbol or exemplification of the aeon, an Anthropos, one reborn, a son of God like the "All in All, composed of all the powers" (*Corpus hermeticum*, Vol. II, XIII, 2).

unto God, you can not understand God, for the like is intelligible only to the like. Make yourself grow until you correspond to greatness without measure, by a leap that will free you from all body; raise yourself above all time, become aeon (become eternity); then will you understand God." <sup>75</sup>

There is, finally, a mental iconography that anticipates the supreme hierophany. Here the perpetual recurrence of one and the same figure, whose soul takes delight in foreseeing the encounter, might well form the basis of a comparative study. It is eminently in Mazdaism that we encounter the apparition of Daēnā at the entrance to Cinvat Bridge, under the aspect of a heavenly Maiden whose beauty surpasses all imagination.<sup>76</sup> But the same vision occurs in Manichaeism <sup>77</sup> and in Sufism as well.<sup>78</sup> We find its equivalent in the Buddhism of the Pure Land.<sup>79</sup> And the Liturgy of Mithras contains an ecstatic anticipation of this eschatological vision when the *mystes*, having become aeon, sees the gates open before him, and the world of the gods and the angels becomes visible to him; when his soul, beside itself with joy, comes face to face with "the god of glittering presence, the god of the golden ringlets, in the flower of his youth, clad in a robe of splendor, crowned with a golden diadem." <sup>80</sup>

Ismaili gnosis will characterize this attainment of transcendence as a passage from the "angel in *potentia*" to the "angel in *actu*." Here we shall find the significance of angelology not only for a certain form of mystical experience but also for an entire anthropology, for a philosophy of the person and the personality. But precisely this philosophy is bound up with a cosmology in which cyclic time has its origin in a *retard*, a *passing beyond*, a relegation to the past. This origin is the drama that befell one of the angels of the pleroma, who will here play the role of the Angel Zervān in the schema of Shahrastānī; and the entire anthropocosmic dramaturgy

<sup>75</sup> *Corpus hermeticum*, XI, 20.

<sup>76</sup> *Hādōxt Nask*, II, 1-15 (= Yasht, XXII, 1-15); Vendidad, XIX, 98-104; *Mēnōkē Xrat*, II, 123-39 (cf. below, Part 2, p. 171, n. 102).

<sup>77</sup> Cf. our "Recit d'initiation," *EJ* 1949, pp. 183-84.

<sup>78</sup> 'Abdolkarīm Gilānī, in R. A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* (Cambridge, 1921), p. 117; and cf. Suhrawardī's hymn to Perfect Nature in our "Recit d'initiation," p. 160.

<sup>79</sup> For the motif of the descent of Amida (Amitābha), cf. H. Minamoto, "L'Iconographie de la 'descente d'Amida,'" in *Etudes d'orientalisme* published by the Musée Guimet in memory of Raymonde Linossier (Paris, 1932), Vol. I, pp. 99-129.

<sup>80</sup> Junker, "Iranische Quellen," p. 152; Reitzenstein, *Das Iranische Erlösungsmysterium*, pp. 238-40; G. R. S. Mead, *A Mithraic Ritual* (London and Benares, 1907), pp. 32, 61, 63.

will be carried toward its final act by the torment of a "retarded eternity." This will be the theme of our next discussion.

## 2. Cyclical Time in Ismailism

### ABSOLUTE TIME AND LIMITED TIME IN THE ISMAILI COSMOLOGY

It was in the course of the tenth and eleventh centuries of our era (fourth and fifth centuries after the Hegira) that the Ismaili theosophy took form in great systematic works, chiefly under the influence of several great Iranian thinkers.<sup>1</sup> One of these thinkers, Abu Hatim Rāzī, whose work, like so many others, still exists only in manuscript, was a Fatimid dignitary (dā'ī) in the Dailam (region to the southwest of the Caspian Sea). He was a contemporary of the celebrated Mohammad ibn Zakarlya Rāzī (the Rhazes of the Latin writers of the Middle Ages, d. ca. 923–32), a physician and alchemist suspected of crypto-Manichaeism, whose philosophical work has today been in large part lost.<sup>2</sup> As their name indicates, both men have a bond with Rhages (the city mentioned in the book of Tobit, the Ragha of the Avesta, today Rayy, several kilometers south of Teheran). It is fortunate for philosophy that these two eminent contemporaries should have met and known each other and that, moreover, since Zakarlya Rāzī was (even posthumously) the object of Ismaili attacks,<sup>3</sup> these two fine minds should have clashed in controversies which were no less intense for all their courtesy.

In one of his books Abu Hatim Rāzī left us a record of one of these discussions.<sup>4</sup> His adversary set his name to a cosmology in which he restored—or perhaps actually founded—an ideal Sabaeen philosophy. This cosmology asserted the existence of five eternal principles: Demiurge, Soul, Matter, Space, and Time.<sup>5</sup> Here we shall be concerned solely with the passage regarding the eternity of Time.<sup>6</sup>

1 Abu Ya'kūb Sejestāni, Mo'ayyad Shirāzi, Hamīdaddīn Kermani, Nāsir-e Khosraw, etc.

2 On Abu Hatim Rāzī, cf. W. Ivanow, *A Guide to Ismaili Literature* (London, 1933), p. 32, viii; *Studies in Early Persian Ismailism* (Leiden, 1948), p. 37 and passim; S. Pines, *Beiträge zur islamischen Atomlehre* (Berlin, 1936), pp. 35ff. On Mohammad ibn Zakariyā Rāzī cf. Pines, pp. 35, 69, and passim. The remains of his philosophical work have been collected by Paul Kraus, *Razis Opera philosophica fragmentaque quae supersunt*, Vol. I (Cairo, 1939).

3 Notably on the part of Nāsir-e Khosraw.

4 In the *Kitāb A'lām al-Nobowwat* (Ivanow, *Guide*, n. 19).

5 Cf. our "Rituel sabéen."

6 Cf. Kraus, *Razis Opera*, p. 304; Pines, *Beiträge*, p. 53.

The bout opens with a loyal challenge:

You have said then that the five principles are eternal (*qadīm*) and alone eternal? Well then, time is constituted by the motion of the spheres, the passage of days and nights, the number of years and months; are all these co-eternal with time, or are they produced in time?<sup>7</sup>—The defender seeks to draw the assailant into a terrain where his weapons will be ineffectual. True, measured by the movement of the Heavens, all the things he has just named are produced in time. But in so arguing he is merely upholding the thesis of Aristotle. Who will venture to say that it has never been disproved? Mohammad ben Zakariyā Rāzī—but at this point let us give him back his old name of Rhazes to simplify matters and distinguish him from his homonym—Rhazes, then, who will end by invoking Plato, begins by stating his own thesis in simple terms: "For my part, I profess this: Time implies an absolute Time (*Zaman muḥlaq*) and a limited time (*Zaman maḥṣūr*). Absolute Time is eternal Duration (*mudda, daḥr*); this is the time that is eternally in movement and never hails. Limited time is that which exists through the movements of the celestial spheres, the course of the sun and the heavenly bodies.

But Abu Hātim asks skeptically what substantial reality (*ḥaqīqa*) one can represent under the concept of this absolute Time. It is not so simple; his adversary asks him to compare the time of this world which is moving toward exhaustion and completion, with the absolute Time that can neither be completed nor destroyed.

What interests us here is neither the details nor the development of the discussion but essentially the statement of Rhazes' thesis. Here we have no wish to debate the question of a historical filiation running from the philosophemes of Mazdaism to those of Ismailism, nor to determine the "influences."<sup>7</sup> But we may say this much: in its terminology, Rhazes' distinction between an absolute Time and a limited time presents a direct and lateral correspondence with the two fundamental aspects of time in the Mazdean cosmogony.<sup>8</sup> The relation seems to have been suggested as early as the

<sup>7</sup> This is a problem which in any case cannot be elucidated by the current methods of purely static and analytical exegesis, by a historicism limited to an essentially causal type of explanation which reads causality into things. With regard to the extreme complexity of the data and the seriousness of the irreparable gaps in our sources, cf. e.g. G. H. Sadighi, *Les Mouvements religieux iraniens au II<sup>e</sup> et au III<sup>e</sup> siècle de l'Hégire* (Paris, 1938).

<sup>8</sup> *Zaman* (= *Zervān*) *i akanārak* and *Zaman i kanārakomand* or *Zaman i derangxvatāi* have been studied in our first lecture.

eleventh century by Ibn Ḥazm, the celebrated Andalusian Arabic writer. In his critical history of religions.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, as the historian Bīrūnī remarked, the doctrine of Rhazes borrowed from Neoplatonism<sup>10</sup> in so far as it distinguished between (1) the Time (*Zamān*, χρόνος) with which number is concerned and which corresponds to the definition of Aristotle; (2) Duration (*Mudda*), analogous to *διάστασις τῆς ζώης*, the distance that dis-tends the life of the soul (for the soul which is not attached as such to the movement and number of the Heavens is that which numbers this number);<sup>11</sup> and finally (3), the aeon (*dahr*), the time of the eternal intelligible world. Actually, the last two aspects tend to fuse into one, and in this respect the entire distinction of Rhazes' doctrine might be attributed to his master Irānshahrī, an Iranian philosopher who lived in the ninth century and who seems to have been a highly original thinker, but whose work is known to us only from a few quotations. Irānshahrī regarded the terms "time," "duration," and "eternity" as one and the same thing considered under two aspects: unmeasured Time (independent of the movements of the Heavens and even of the soul, since it refers to a plane of the intelligible universe that is superior to the soul) and Time measured by the movement of the heavens. Thus, since eternal Duration and Time are only two aspects of the same essence, the distinction made by Rhazes between absolute Time and limited time would correspond to that between separated time and unseparated Time: *χώριστος χρόνος* and *ἀχώριστος χρόνος* in the terminology of Proclus.<sup>12</sup>

Now the Ismaili theosophy of mythohistory presupposes precisely the representation of an eternal Time—whose eternity, however, erupts in cycles of successive times whose rotation carries them back to their origin. What, then, we cannot help wondering at this point, was the reason for the per-

9 *Kitāb al Fisal* (Cairo, 1348), Vol. I, p. 35.

10 Cf. Bīrūnī's text in Pines, pp. 49-52.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 50, n. 2: the interpretations of Simplicius and Alexander of Aphrodisias. Cf. Nasir-e Khosraw, *Jāmi al-Ḥikmatain*, ed. Corbin and Moīn, ch. 9, pp. 117-20, §§ 114-15; and ch. 17 (cf. below).

12 Cf. Pines, pp. 51-52; 41, n. 2; and 85, n. 4. The problem also attracted the attention of the philosophers of the Safawid period, Mīr Dāmād and Ṣadrā Shīrāzī. Cf. also Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*, ed. E. R. Dodds (Oxford, 1933), p. 228 (*Αἰών-Zervān* as hypostasis); and E. Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen* (3rd edn., Leipzig, 1903-22), Vol. III, Part 2, p. 707 (Iamblichus). The powerful personality of Iranshahrī is indicated by the tradition according to which he rejected all religions and created one of his own. Do the words of sympathy and praise with which Nasir-e Khosraw refers to him suggest that this personal position was not without its affinity to Ismailism?



sistent attacks on Rhazes? Essentially he was attacked as the "Sabaean philosopher," the negator of Prophecy; not that Ismailism upheld the prophetology of official and orthodox Islam, but its entire technique of interior or spiritual exegesis (*ta'wil*) presupposes the text transmitted by the Prophets (*Nātiq*). Similarly, the correspondence between celestial hierarchy and earthly hierarchy presupposes that the "mediators" of salvation are not merely the spiritual angels of ideal Sabaeism.<sup>13</sup> Even when Rhazes sets out to describe absolute Time, the Ismaili thinker, under the stress of polemical considerations, seems to suppose that he is still speaking of the time of sensuous things, of the time that "is nothing other than the changing states of that which is body."<sup>14</sup> And there will be all the more indignation when Rhazes, positing Time as one of the five eternal principles, seems to make a thing, a substance, of it.<sup>15</sup> But once polemical ardors have abated, the motif of the twofold aspect of Time as a *single* essence will reappear with an imperious necessity.<sup>16</sup> This will be the case with the great Iranian Ismaili philosopher, Nāsir-e Khosraw (eleventh century).

In a closely reasoned chapter of a work which is a synthesis of Greek and Ismaili philosophy,<sup>17</sup> Nāsir compares the notions of eternity (*dahr*) and of time (*zamān*),<sup>18</sup> and sets forth this proposition: "Time is eternity measured by the movements of the heavens, whose name is day, night, month, year. Eternity is Time not measured, having neither beginning nor end." "It is the Time of Duration without end, absolute Duration."<sup>19</sup> The cause of this eternal Duration is the first divine Emanation, the first primordial Intelligence or Archangel: eternity is in the horizon (or in the sphere) of this Intelligence. The cause of time is the Soul of the World; but the Soul is itself in the horizon of the Archangel; it is not in time, for time is in the horizon of the Soul as its instrument, as the duration of the living mortal who is "the shadow of the Soul," while eternity is the duration of the living immortal—that is to say, of the Intelligence and of the Soul.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Cf. our "Rituel sabéen," pp. 195ff.

<sup>14</sup> Nasir-e Khosraw does this in *Kūāb Zād al-Mosāfirin*, ed. Kaviāni (Berlin, n.d.), p. 111.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 112-13.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110. On the importance of Nasir-e Khosraw (d. ca. 481 A.H./A.D. 1088), who organized the Ismaili community of Badakhshan, the Oxus region at the eastern end of the Iranian world, cf. W. Ivanow's recent study, *Nāsir-e Khosraw and Ismailism* (The Ismaili Society, series B, V, Leiden and Bombay, 1948).

<sup>17</sup> This is the work cited above, n. 11, which is a synthesis of Greek and Ismaili philosophy.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118, li. 6, 7. Cf. § 109 and *Zād*, pp. 117-18, 364-65.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118, li. 8.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113, § 109; p. 117, § 114; cf. p. 188, § 192.

In declaring, "The Intelligence is one with eternal Time," Nāsir-e Khosraw is also stating the secret of the speculative Ismaili cosmology: the eternal birth of the pleroma from the *Ibdā* (eternal Existentialization), formed of archangelical hypostases originating in the first among them. This world is not of an immutability and immobility presenting a simple contrast to the perishability of sensuous things; there are Events in Heaven, archetypal Events preceding the Creation of things, and these Events are the very genesis of being. This ontological mystery is circumscribed by Nāsir in three words (*azal*, *azaliyat*, *azalī*) the nuances of which we should have some difficulty in translating if the author, even though writing in Persian, did not relate them to Arabic paradigms. Thus we have an eternally-being (*azal*) as *nomen agentis* (present participle *fā'īl*); an eternal actuation of being (*azallyat*) as *nomen verbi* (noun of action, *fī'l*); an eternally being made-to-be (*azali*) as *nomen patientis* (past participle, *maf'ūl*).<sup>21</sup> The text is marvelously abstruse, but it discloses the following: by being eternally, the eternally-being (*azal*) actuates precisely its own being-that-has-become, its being which has eternally been—that is to say, which is eternally made-to-be by its own act of being. We must bear in mind that in terms of Ismaili philosophy the eternally-being constitutes the supreme godhead, absolutely unknowable and unpredictable.<sup>22</sup> But what this godhead is eternally in actuating its being, in revealing it, is the first archangelical hypostasis (*al-mobda' al-arwāl*),<sup>23</sup> its eternal Personification, its very Ipseity, the Only One forever being revealed. This Archangel is the *Deus determinatus* (*al-Lāh*) to such a point that all the predicates which the exoteric religions would focus on the supreme godhead should actually be applied to this divine Epiphany within the first Intelligence (*'Aql arwāl*).

Here Nasir explicitly calls our attention to an ontological aspect with which the "speculative grammar" of our Middle Ages was very much concerned and which was designated as the *significatio passiva*. Here it is the aspect which action assumes in its end, in that wherein it is accomplished (*nomen patientis*), at the very point where action in being fulfilled is no longer distinguished from *passio*, since *passio* is its outcome (as, for example, writing and the thing written, *scriptio* and *scriptum*). As Nāsir said: "The *significatio passiva* of the *nomen patientis* (*maf'ūl-i-ema'f'ūl*) consists in the

21 Ibid., ch. 17, pp. 187-89, §§ 191-93, much more precise than *Zād*, p. 195.

22 "He who cannot be attained by the boldness of thought." Cf. R. Strothmann, *Gnosis-Texte der Ismailiten* (Göttingen, 1943), p. 55.

23 Cf. *Jamī' al-Ḥikmatayn*, p. 188, li. 9.

very action of the agent, which is accomplished in him." In this sense the Archangel of the primordial theophany considered as the end in which is accomplished the ontomorphosis of the eternal Being appears as eternal Action or divine Energy and as eternal, divine Passion (or divine "pathetism"). As eternally made-to-be, the Archangel is the eternal, divine Past. Since by this very token he is in his person Action-made-to-be, this active aspect of his eternal being summons to being, actuates the procession of archangelical entities that follow him; and the same duality of *actio* and *passio* is repeated at every degree, producing the eternal birth of a new Archangel.

In their very nature these premises are difficult to understand. But without them it is impossible to grasp the principle of the Ismaili cosmic dramaturgy, to understand why the consequence of the error of the angel which will take the role of the Angel Zervān (in the schema of Shahrastānī) will be described as a "retard"—the regression of a rank (that of the Angel) which lets itself be surpassed, put behind (*ta' akhkhōr, takhallof*). Actually if this is true, the eternal Existentiality (*Ibdā'*) of the primordial Archangel, which is at the origin of the pleroma, is not only eternal actuation of being but also eternally to come, eternal advent. The eternal Past *is* eternally actuated; it does not *become* a past, it is not *thrust into* the past, it does not sink into a past that is more and more past, as we say that the past sinks into time. But then the intoxication that will seize the Angel in the illusion that he himself is the actuation of his being—precisely this intoxication will remove him from eternal actuation, from the eternal advent of being. His doubt stops him to himself, thrusts him into the past, and by this fall into the past his own rank is *surpassed* (here again space is born from time).<sup>24</sup> At this moment "temporal (or limited) Time" is born, a time in which there is a remoteness, a past that is no longer eternal, a past that is no longer.

Nevertheless, the Ismaili vision contains a repentance, a *conversion* already accomplished by the Angel; and through this conversion the temporal time originating in his fault has also *shifted back*. That is why this Time has the form of a cycle; it is not a rectilinear time indefinitely accumulating a past and leading nowhere, but a time leading back to the origin. There is redemption from the past: the angelic rank is surpassed, it falls into the

<sup>24</sup> Or again visual space is only one aspect of space, perhaps a symbol of true space, just as the time of our chronologies is only an aspect or a symbol of Time; there is no opposition between Time and Eternity, there are only two aspects of Time as such, *Αἰών* and *Αἰώνας*.

past, and then again becomes future. To lead back to the origin: this is the exact meaning of the word which designates esoteric spiritual exegesis (*tawil*), the central operation of Ismaili thought, of which the alchemical operation is only a special case.<sup>25</sup> Thus cyclical Time leading back to the origin becomes itself an exegesis, the total exegesis of mankind, the archetype of all exegesis.

This generation of Time and this redemption by Time may be viewed differently according to the diversity of our sources: Iranian sources of the Fatimid period, Iranian sources of Persian Neo-Isma'ilism of the Alamut tradition, Arabian Fatimid sources, or Yemenite sources in the Fatimid tradition.<sup>26</sup> In any event these schemata put forward a representation of Time as an instrument, making it possible to overcome a retard, a being-passed-by. But according to the greater or lesser amplitude seen in the archangelical pleroma, the generation of Time occurs peacefully, as it were, under the pressure of a sense of ontological imperfection—or else it occurs through a catastrophe ushering in a dramaturgy analogous to that of the Mazdean cosmology.

The first schema is drawn from Iranian sources, particularly Nāsir-e Khosraw. He describes the procession of the five primordial archangelical hypostases, the first two of which are the Intelligence (*'Aql*) and the Soul (*Nafs*).<sup>27</sup> This eternal motion which moves the being of the first Intelligence or Archangel is an eternal movement of adoration of the Principle, which eternally actuates it toward being. From this eternal movement of adoration, from this cosmic liturgy, the Soul of the World eternally takes its birth.<sup>28</sup> This Soul is a second Archangel which is like the first in that it is

25 Cf. our study "Le Livre du Glorieux de Jābir ibn Ḥayyān," *EJ* 1950.

26 It is not possible to discuss the periods of Isma'ilism here in detail. For an orientation cf. L. Massignon's article "Karmates" in the *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*; W. Ivanow, "Ismā'īliya" (ibid., *Supplément*), and the introduction to his *Guide*; Strothmann, *Texte*, pp. 1-8. The sources to which I have been constrained to limit myself here are essentially: for Fatimid Isma'ilism, Nasir-e Khosraw (Persian)—cf. above, n. 16; for the post-Fatimid Yemenite (Arabic) tradition, Sayyid-nā Idrīs 'Imādaddīn, 19th Yemenite dā'ī (d. 872/1462, cf. the *Guide*, LV, p. 62); for the Persian tradition of Alamūt, the *Rawdatu't-Taslim* (Persian) attributed to Nasiraddīn Tūsī (d. 672/1274).

27 The three others being *Jadd* (= Persian *bakht*—cf. above, Part I, p. 140, n. 65), *Fath*, and *Khayāl*, identified with the Archangels Gabriel, Michael, and Seraphiel, according to Abu Ya'kūb Sejestānī, *Kitāb al-Mawāzin* (The Book of Balances, unpublished MS), ch. 12.

28 Cf. Nāsir-e Khosraw, *Six Chapters or Shish Fasl, also called Rawshanā' ī-Nāma*, Persian text ed. and tr. into English by W. Ivanow (The Ismaili Society, series B, VI. Leiden, 1949), p. 42 (pp. 13, 14 in the pagination of the Persian text).

perfect (*in potentia*) but unlike it in that it is imperfect (*in actu*), since its being proceeds from the principle only through the intermediary of the first Archangel. Just as this Soul *is* the adoration of the primordial Archangel, so the Cosmos *is* in turn the adoration of the Soul—with this difference, that the Soul cannot complete its work, cannot make good the margin of imperfection and incompleteness that comes to it solely from Time.<sup>29</sup> That is why it starts the movement of the Cosmos; it tends toward its perfection through the great souls which appear from epoch to epoch in this world, not only the Prophets but in general all the members of the esoteric Church, up to the coming of the *Qā'im*, the Resurrector.<sup>30</sup> Here then the cycle of Time is measured by the Soul's effort to make good its own ontological imperfection.

Another schema develops the procession of ten archangelical hypostases.<sup>31</sup> With one of them, the third, a crisis occurs which shakes the celestial pleroma. This is the drama in Heaven, which is the origin of the drama on Earth; the earthly persons exemplify the eternal *dramatis personae* through the periods of an indefinite succession of cycles. This is the dramaturgy that we shall consider here.

#### THE PERIODS AND CYCLES OF MYTHOISTORY

1. *The drama in heaven.* We have already stressed the idea that in eternal Time the eternal divine Past *is* eternally actuated and does not fall into the past as a time which "is no longer." Thus the procession of archangelical hypostases, which are the events of this past eternally in the present, is manifested to us as the harmony of a perfect hierarchy; there is no retard, no surpassing of one by the other.<sup>32</sup> If such a surpassing does occur, it will bring about a rupture of this eternal Presence in the present; there will be a sort of fraction of pure ether that has become impermeable to the Light. And it is always through the idea of surpassing and obfuscation, of

29 *Ibid.*, pp. 50, 51, 66 of the translation. Cf. the fine ch. 54 of the *Khwān al-Ikhwān* (Table of the Brothers) of Nāsir-e Khosraw, ed. Y. al-Khachab (Khashshāb) (Cairo, 1940), pp. 137-39, on the cosmic liturgy of the universal Intelligence or primordial Archangel.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 49.

31 Described, notably, in a voluminous work by Hamīd Kermānī (*Rāhat al-'Aql*) consecrated to the correspondences between the hierarchies of the celestial and earthly universes. Cf. below, n. 96.

32 Idrīs 'Imādaddīn (cf. above, n. 26), *Zahr al-Ma'ānī* (unpublished MS), ch. 4.

regression and opacity that our Ismaili theosophists describe the catastrophe that befell one of the Angels of the pleroma of the *Ibdā'*.

Thus the temporal dimension expressed as retard (we have just spoken of "retarded eternity") introduces into the pure Light an alien dimension which is translated as opacity and so alters a relation that could be measured and spatialized only in the dimension of pure Light. For a being of Light this temporal dimension is a falling off from himself, and that is why it is defined as the radical Evil.<sup>33</sup> Here lies the source of the entire Ismaili ethic, which enjoins upon man an unremitting effort to tear himself away from this heaviness, which in every surpassed excellence (*mafḍūl*) finds a reason for striving toward a higher excellence (*aḡḍal*), and which thus from step to step accomplishes in the mythical hierarchy a repetition of resurrections (*qiyāmā*) whereby the mystic rises unremittingly above himself.

But how did the rupture take place? In contemplating itself, the prime Intelligence recognizes the mystery of its being; the act of eternally-being which actuates it constitutes it eternally in being; this is the act of which it is the *significatio passiva*, the *maf'ūl*, and which in itself, as something eternally made-to-be, it is not.<sup>34</sup> This recognition is its eternal adoration (its *tawḥīd*), which actuates the Angel who issues from it and who is the Soul of the World; it is the cosmic liturgy which is eternally celebrated by the Archangel<sup>35</sup> and in which beings of every form have their source. The mystery of its being, according to the Yemenite theologian Idrīs 'Imādaddīn (fifteenth century), is like the light (here *perfectio prima*) which, in penetrating the absolutely limpid ether, makes it Light (*significatio passiva*) and thus constitutes it in its own perfection of Light (*perfectio secunda*). And that is why the prime Intelligence is at the same time the veil (*ḥijāb*) and the supreme Name (*Ism a mm*) of the eternally-Being.<sup>36</sup>

At once act and passion, at once the Veil that conceals and the Name that names and reveals, at once adoring (in respect to the Principle that actuates it) and adored (by those to whom it reveals the Principle), the

33 Ibid.

34 Here one must bear in mind the dialectic of the *maf'ūl* mentioned above (nn. 21, 23). The prime Intelligence is the *Mabda* of the *Ibdā'* of the *Mobdā'*. Now the *Mobda'īya* (= *maf'ūliya*) of the *Mobda'* (= *maf'ūl*) is only the passive aspect, the *significatio passiva* of the active *Ibdā'* (eternal existentiation).

35 Cf. above, n. 29.

36 The prime 'Aql is the Angel brought closer (*malak moqarrab*), the sacrosanct (*moqaddas*) Angel, the Lotus of the Limit, etc. Cf. Idrīs, *Zuhr*, chs. 6, 7; Strothmann, *Texte*, III, 4-6.

prime Intelligence is constituted in its being by a simultaneity which conditions both its transparency and the potency by virtue of which all the beings of Light, the archangelical hypostases, emanate from its being. The second of these hypostases (called Enclosure of the Sacrosanct, Paradise of the Refuge, Universal Soul<sup>37</sup>) stands in the same relation to the prime Intelligence as the prime Intelligence to the Principle; in it is repeated the same simultaneity of obedience and prerogative. It is the first to hear the appeal of the prime Intelligence<sup>38</sup> (the *da'wat*, and this is the very word which denotes the esoteric *mission* of the Ismaili Church on earth), an appeal summoning all the other Intelligences to celebrate the same liturgy as itself. This appeal has been heard by innumerable worlds (*'arwālim*) of angels, forming ten great divisions, each of which is peopled with innumerable angels and has an angel-prince at its head.<sup>39</sup>

Yet this obedience implied an exception, a transgression against it, and this was the prologue of the cosmic dramaturgy. From the dyad of the first and second Archangel, Intelligence and Soul of the World, issues a third Archangel,<sup>40</sup> who is called *Adam Rūḥānī*, the spiritual Adam; this is the Angel of mankind, demiurge of our world. He appears as a hypostasis of Arabo-Persian Neoplatonism, but also shows certain traits of the Manichaean and Gnostic Anthropos. Still more precisely, his role corresponds to that of the Angel Zervan. Let us recall this Angel's doubt as set forth in *Shahrestānī*: "If the entire universe were nothing . . ." (Ibn Hazm speaks of an excess of melancholy, a prostration).<sup>41</sup> But what universe could have been nothing? Zervan was an Angel of the pleroma existing before the physical universe. And Ismaili Gnosis states exactly what it was that the Angel's error placed in doubt: the eternal ontological anteriority of the two Archangels who mediate between the Principle and the third Archangel.

37 *Zahr*, ch. 7. It is by his adoration mingled with an eternal rejoicing that the first Angel (*Sābiq*) gives existence to the following Angel (*Tall*), who is then actually the first Emanation (*Inbi'āth*), since the first is not *monba'ūh* but *mobda'*. The *tawḥīd* of the second Angel consists in recognizing his ontological rank in the *Ibda'*, his *muf'ūlī* (*significatiopassiva*) with regard to the first Angel. Thus we have the original dyad or syzygy, the pair *Sābiq-Tālī*.

38 *Ibid.*, ch. 8.

39 Here I cannot develop the interesting comparisons that might be drawn with the angelological schemata of *3 Enoch*, ed. Odeberg. Cf. also G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (3rd edn., New York, 1954), pp. 68ff.

40 And second Emanation (*al-Inbi'āth al-thānī*). On this angel's relation to the Angel Gabriel in the philosophy of Suhrawardī, cf. our "Récit d'initiation," *EJ* 1950.

41 *Istawḥasha*. Not so much a sin of "pride" as an attack of melancholy in forsakenness and solitude.

Is he not their equal? Does he not even precede them? Is he not first and alone, originating in himself? Hence his refusal to recognize their precedence, to hear the appeal, to testify to the Oneness (*ta'wḥīd*).<sup>42</sup>

Thus the third Angel stops at himself: he remains motionless in a stupor which gives rise to a gap, a distance between himself and the world of eternal Existentiality from which he cuts himself off. There comes to be a "Time which passes" and creates a remoteness. The transgression becomes a regression: this is the rupture of the eternal Future (*abad*) which eternally actualizes the eternal Past (*azal*) in the Present. When the Angel tears himself free from this stupor, he sees himself "retarded," surpassed (*ta'akhhor*, *takhallof*), fallen behind himself. From third he has become tenth. To the Time of his stupor that he must redeem corresponds the emanation of the seven other Intelligences which are called the seven Cherubim or the seven Divine Words.<sup>43</sup> Similarly seven periods will punctuate each of the cycles of cosmic Time. Because this drama of the Angel forms the prologue in Heaven of the drama of mankind whose Angel he is, writers have been pleased to find in his deed the archetype of Adam's transgression (his paradise was the world of the *Ibdā*; the tree which he was not to touch was the rank of the Archangel preceding him, who is the mediator of his being, etc.). Moreover, as we have said, the retard, as a temporal dimension, introduces an opacity in the dimension of pure Light. Here, as in the Angel Zervan, the Imagination of the Angel who goes astray manifests his Darkness, his Ahriman, his Iblis.<sup>44</sup>

But here precisely we perceive the difference of which we have spoken. If this Iblis-Satan is born within the angelic being as Ahriman taking birth in Zervan, a no less decisive change occurs in the Zervanite dramaturgy. Externalized as Ahriman outside of Zervan, Iblis is not invested with any legitimacy whatsoever. No ambiguity remains. He is expelled from the Angel and becomes as radically alien from him as Ahriman to Ohrmazd. More precisely, the Angel, freeing himself from his stupor, tears Iblis out of himself, like an Archangel Michael achieving his own victory over himself.<sup>45</sup>

42 Cf. Idris, *Zahr*, ch. 9, and the text of Sayyid-nā Hosain ibn 'Alī, eighth Yemenite *dā'i* (d. 667 A.H./A.D. 1268: Ivanow, *Guide*, XLIX, p. 60), ed. Bernard Lewis, "An Ismaili Interpretation of the Fall of Adam," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, IX (1937-39), 702. It should also be recalled that this drama in heaven derives from our sources of Fatimid or Western Ismaili tradition (the old *da'wat*).

43 Cf. Strothmann, *Texte*, XIII, I.

44 Cf. Lewis, "Ismaili Interpretation"; Idris, *Zahr*, ch. 13.

45 Lewis, p. 703; and Idris, *Zahr*, ch. 9.



Iblis is hurled to earth and his form subsists as the purely Demonic. Thus the being of the third Angel is the mediator, the medium through which Darkness is born, but through which it is also vanquished.

At the same time he is the Angel-prince of an entire universe of Angels who are formed in his image (*ṣūwaruhum 'an ṣūralihi*); they follow his destiny and he is responsible for them. He has thus immobilized them by his own stupor; it is their entire universe that is *surpassed*, that is retarded. Thus the Angel's movement of *conversion* is accompanied by the appeal (*da'wat*) which he finally transmits to them from the prime Intelligence (appeal to the esoteric *tawḥīd*), and which is also a calling to accomplish in themselves, in their being which is in his image, this conversion and victory of their Angel. Some hear the appeal, others persist in negation and denial. The former, who show a striking resemblance to the Mazdean Fravartis, are the celestial archetypes of the earthly heralds and proclaimers of the mystical *da'wat*; they are the posterity of the spiritual Adam. The others are the posterity of Iblis, the implacable adversaries, demons with human faces, who appear from cycle to cycle until the form of Iblis-Ahriman is extinguished.<sup>46</sup>

The profound metaphysical idea that this temporal distance or dimension engenders space is here applied to the generation of the Cosmos. As our Yemenite theologian points out, the retard brought upon the Angels themselves by the fault of their Archangel places them in a situation where a threefold mental movement lends their being a tridimensionality adapted to an existence in the dense and opaque world of material nature. Not only because he is compassionate and merciful,<sup>47</sup> but also because he himself suffers in these Angels who are his members, their Archangel (far from being the wicked Archon of certain Gnostic systems) creates for them a cosmos which is the instrument of their purification and the scene of the combat which is at once theirs and his.<sup>48</sup>

46 Lewis, p. 703; Idris, *Zahr*, chs. 9, 10; Strothmann, *Texte*, XII, 38.

47 Cf. the nature of the Archangel Michael in I Enoch 40:9, in *The Book of Enoch*, tr. R. H. Charles (Oxford, 1912), p. 73; and 3 *Enoch*, ed. Odeberg, intro., p. 98, n. 1 (Metatron). Cf. above, Part 1, nn. 9, 51, 55.

48 Idris, *Zahr*, ch. 10. The idea that in and through their existence and his metamorphoses all his fellow Angels are the time and place of the Angel's battle—and that their existence is equally a battle for the Angel—belongs to a chapter of mystical experience to which we are planning to devote a comparative study. Cf. e.g. the case of Johann Georg Gichtel of the school of Jacob Boehme: ch. 5, "Vom Streit Michaels und des Drachens" in *Eine kurze Eröffnung und Anweisung der dreyen Principien*

Here we have a magnificent symbol. The repentance and nostalgia of the Angel are conceived as an energy penetrating the entire universe: the spheres, the elements, and the adepts—that is to say, the human beings of the posterity of the spiritual Adam. This energy is the leaven of the original Existentialization (*al-khamīrat al-ibdā'īya*); it is the eternal Eve of the Angel of mankind. It is at the same time his nostalgia and his return to Paradise; it is this energy which from cycle to cycle engenders all his fellows in the angelical state, and finally engenders the *Imam* of Resurrection, the *Qā'im* or Resurrector.<sup>49</sup> This nostalgia then presupposes a past time, something which is relegated to the past in time. But it is also the expectation of something to come. And this something to come is precisely what the fault, the retard of the Angel, has put into the past: the paradisiacal state of pure Light. The nostalgia and expectation lead back to this past, they are a conversion *toward* it. Here, then, the phenomenon of cyclical Time is the reverse of our linear time which accumulates the past. In its passing, cyclical Time abolishes the past, changes it into the future that approaches increasingly. It does not remove us from the source, but leads us back to it; in the being whose form it is and who is *converted* back to his origin, cyclical Time presupposes that special dimension which we have called archetypal and which has its original form in the primitive universe of the Angel.

This form of cyclical Time is subject to developments. The simplest primitive schema would seem to have been a single cycle, punctuated by seven periods or *millennia*, each ushered in by an Enunciator prophet (*Naṭīq*) of a new Revelation, assisted by a spiritual legate (*Wāṣī*) who is the foundation (*Asās*) of the Imamate and who throughout his period transmits the secret or esoteric meaning of the doctrine to the Seven Imams who are descended from him.<sup>50</sup> Later, astronomical and astrological speculations made it possible to conceive of a Grand Cycle (*dawr a'zam*) composed of cycles each governed by a planet and divided into seven periods of seven

*und Welten im Menschen . . .* durch Johann Georg Grabern . . . Johann Georg Gichtel (new edn., Berlin and Leipzig, 1779), pp. 91–98.

49 Idrīs, *Zahr*, ch. to; and cf. Naṣīraddin Ṭūsī, *The "Rawdatu't Taslim," Commonly Called Taṣawwūrāt*, Persian text ed. and tr. into English by W. Ivanow (The Ismaili Society Series, A, 4, Leiden and Bombay, 1950), p. 70 of the tr.

50 It has already been observed that the fundamental doctrines professed by various Islamic and Christian Gnostic sects have certain elements in common. In regard to this periodicity of Revelation cf. the Clementine Homilies quoted in W. Ivanow, *The Alleged Founder of Ismailism* (The Ismaili Society Series, A, 1, Bombay, 1946), p. 131. No. 2. Cf. also below, n. 74.

millennia, the whole to be concluded by the Grand Resurrection.<sup>51</sup> The resulting figures are truly "astronomical" <sup>52</sup> (a Grand Cycle of 360,000 years; some of the sayings of the Imams reckon the time past at 400,000 Grand Cycles, each including 400,000 periods). Furthermore, the cycles of Time were held to reflect the drama that they exemplified: just as the aeon of Ahriman was expected to be followed by the aeon of Ohrmazd, so cycles of Epiphany or Unveiling (*dawr al-kashf*) were conceived as alternating with cycles of Occultation (*dawr al-satr*).

But here we discern the consequences of the alteration of the Zervanite dramaturgy. Iblis-Ahriman is never invested with a legitimate sovereignty, he is the Adversary pure and simple. During the cycles of Epiphany, the form of Iblis (*al-šūrat al-iblisīya*) is held prisoner in the "world of the mothers," that is to say, in the world of the simple elements.<sup>53</sup> And because the Angel had defeated his Iblis, the Grand Cycle began with a cycle of Epiphany and not with a cycle of Occultation and Darkness. It was ushered in by the appearance of the earthly Anthropos, the universal Adam (on the island of Ceylon) in the sixth millennium (governed by Mercury-Hermes) of the first period of the first cycle (both governed by Saturn).<sup>54</sup> On earth this universal Adam typifies the spiritual Adam and is the prototype of the Adam of the Bible and the Koran. The cycle of Unveiling which he inaugurates is a beatific cycle in which the true Gnosis is openly preached, in which men are exempt from bodily infirmity and ugliness of soul.<sup>55</sup> It endured until the approach of the first cycle of Occultation, when the form of Iblis reappeared and the drama on earth actually began.

2. *The drama on earth.* But how many cycles, each inaugurated by a "partial Adam" (*Adam jūz'ī*), alternated prior to the cycle of Occultation whose rigors we are now experiencing? The Ismaili mythohistory does not record

51 *Qiyāmat al-Qiyāmāt* (literally the Resurrection of Resurrections). On the connections with Babylonian astrology (Planets, Metals, and Ages of the World) cf. W. Bousset, "Die Himmelsreise der Seele," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, III (1900), 243-44.

52 Idrīs, *Zahr*, ch. 11; *Texte*, I, 8 (p. 12 of the text); II, 1 (p. 19), IV, 20 (p. 53); Nasīr Tūsī, *Tasawwūrāt* (above, n. 46), pp. LXXV-LXXVI, and pp. 67-68 of the translation; *Kalāmi Pir*, ed. and tr. VV. Ivanow (Bombay, 1935), p. xxxv, and p. 19 of the text.

53 Cf. Strothmann, *Texte*, I, 6; IV, 2.

54 The *πανάνθρωπος* substitute for the tenth Angel (cf. *Texte*, p. 56): *Adam al-awwal al-kollī*, cf. Idrīs, *Zahr*, ch. 12. This is the primordial Imam, repository and foundation of the Imamate, the institution which by preserving the esoteric meaning of all the Revelations gives mankind the possibility of mystical salvation.

55 Cf. Strothmann, *Texte*, I, 5.

the exact number, but only the vastness of the perspective.<sup>56</sup> It merely registers the veiled memory of nameless upheavals and crimes which preceded the history of present mankind. No archive records them, but their trace has been found in every epoch by the activity of the metaphysical Imagination—from the ecstatic books of Enoch down to Franz von Baader.

The postulates of the Ismaili theosophy might here be amplified in the light of a comparative research.<sup>57</sup> First of all they present a decisive contrast to the idea of "primitive man" accepted by our human sciences. Present mankind is regarded not as a summit of progress but as descended from a superior mankind through a catastrophe of whose mystery we can gain only a distant intimation. It does not issue from the gloom of savagery, from a void and an absence of humanity; the most ancient monuments bear witness not to a babbling, nor even to a dawn, but rather to a twilight.<sup>58</sup> When the speculative Imagination encounters the proposition of vulgar exoteric theology "that there was a time when the world did not exist," it is fitting, declares Naṣīraddīn Tūsī (Iranian theologian of the thirteenth century) to remind these theologians that they have remained on a plane of fictitious representation, that in the sense in which they take the words *time* and *world* "there never was a time when this world did not exist."<sup>59</sup> Or rather, this proposition is intelligible only if we have in mind the universe constituted by 18,000 worlds—that is to say, successive cycles each of which is actually one world.<sup>60</sup> These worlds result not from a historical causality but from a homology between cycles exemplifying the same archetypes. In short, there was a race of human beings superior to ours, who were the educators of our race; to this race belonged the Adam of the Bible and Koran. Far from having been the first man on earth, Adam was one of the last survivors of the cycle of Epiphany preceding our cycle of Occultation.<sup>61</sup>

The idea of this *exegesis* from one cycle to another inspires all Ismaili exegesis of the Koran. At the approach of the cycle of Occultation, the form

56 Cf. *ibid.*, B, 1 (pp. 142-43 of the Arabic text).

57 Cf. above, n. 47.

58 Cf. Schelling, *Essais*, tr. into French by S. Jankélévitch (Paris, 1946), pp. 213-15.

59 *Taṣawwūrāt*, p. 48 of the text and pp. 65 and 67 of the translation. It should be noted that we also find this figure of 18,000 worlds in 3 *Enoch* 24 : 17. Cf. also Hans Bietenhard, *Die himmlische Welt im Urchristentum und Spätjudentum* (Tubingen, 1951), pp. 72-73.

60 *Ibid.*, pp. 65, 66-67.

61 One might well amplify this cyclical conception of history in which the idea of an intercyclical homology contrasts sharply with an evolutionist conception of rectilinear "progress." One cannot help thinking of Spengler's ideas.

of Iblis is liberated and is manifested by grave symptoms which disturb the state of harmony and innocence characterizing the angelical mankind of the ending cycle.<sup>62</sup> These disturbances oblige the dignitaries to restore the discipline of the arcanum at the threshold of a world and a mankind which the direct vision of the celestial figures would only incite to destructive fury. But those who had been the "Angels" of the cycle of Unveiling—that is to say, those initiated into the Gnosis of Resurrection (*da'wat-e-Qiyāmat*)—cannot bear the prospect of renouncing the state of freedom and innocence, of direct intuition of all truth; they cannot defer to the demands of the new esotericism. Their horror at the strictures of a religious Law gives way, however, in the course of a dialogue full of prescience and sadness. In the literal Koran text the dialogue takes place between God and his Angels; the Ismaili *ta'wīl* transposes it by one octave: here it is the last Imam of the cycle who gravely declares to his earthly angels: "I know what you do not know" (Koran 2 : 28). One of them, the young Adam, is invested as Proclaimer (*Nāṭiq*) of the new religious Law.<sup>63</sup> Now begins a drama which must be understood as an imitation and exemplification of the drama in Heaven. It consists of two episodes: the revolt of Iblis and the vengeance of Iblis, having as corollary what may be called "the error of the hierophant."

At the beginning of the new cycle the form of Iblis was incarnated in one of the dignitaries named Harith ibn Murra, one of those whose office it had been to initiate the earthly angels of the cycle of Unveiling in the Gnosis of Resurrection. His refusal to recognize the new religious Law is implacable: is he to begin the arduous pilgrimage of the degrees of initiation all over again? Was he not created of fire, whereas the young Adam, restricted to the science of symbols, is made only of clay? Why then should he and the other earthly angels bow down before Adam?<sup>64</sup> When the Angel tears his Iblis from within him and hurls it to earth, all the ambiguity that is still possible in Zervanism has ceased: Harith incarnates an Iblis-Ahriman in the pure state, the No without the Yes, the contrary power of the Adversary.<sup>65</sup>

The temptation to which Iblis incarnated as Harith ibn Murra subjects

62 Cf. Idrīs, *Zahr*, ch. 12, and Nāsir Ṭūsī, *Taṣawwūrāt*, ch. 16, p. 49 of the text. Here the versions of the two great Ismaili traditions are in agreement.

63 Cf. Koran 2:35. On the father of Adam, on Ḥonaid, his Imam *mostawda'* and their Ismaili descendants, cf. Strothmann, *Texte*, X, 26.

64 "They all bowed down except for Iblis, who was one of the genii" (Koran 18 : 48). Cf. the order to worship Adam in "Vita Adae et Evae," quoted in Wilhelm Lucken, *Michael* (Göttingen, 1898), p. 29.

65 Cf. *Taṣawwūrāt*, pp. 68-69.

Adam, and through which he takes his vengeance, consists in persuading Adam that since the perfect science of Resurrection was revealed by the last Imam (Qā'im) of the preceding cycle to which they both belonged, and since the blissful men of that cycle owed their state of innocence and freedom to this gnosis, the men of the new cycle should not be deprived of it.<sup>66</sup> In his inexperience, the young Adam lets himself be convinced and commits the supreme "error of the hierophant": he reveals the secret to men who are unfit to receive it, betrays the symbols to the unworthy. And now the drama which befell the Angel of Mankind in heaven finds its earthly exemplification,<sup>67</sup> and here it is shared by two persons. Now Iblis represents only the Angel's *past*, which the Angel by his victory has cut off from himself and which Time, from cycle to cycle, carries toward its annulment. And Adam, having approached the forbidden tree—that is to say, the Gnosis of Resurrection (the divulging of which was reserved for the last Imām)—"escaped through the wide-open door of Mercy." Like the Angel readmitted to the pleroma, Adam by his repentance returns with his posterity to the "paradise in *potentia*"<sup>68</sup>—that is, the *da'wat*, the esoteric Ismaili Church on earth. Its members are the "Angels in *potentia*," like the incarnated Fravartis of Mazdaism, carrying on the battle against the demons with human faces, who are the posterity of Iblis-Ahriman.

And just as the repentance of the Angel, the spiritual Adam, was the eternal Eve, his nostalgia and return to Paradise, so, Nāsīr Tūsī declares, Eve, wife of the earthly Adam, is the spiritual and secret meaning of the positive religion (its *bāḥin*), for she had knowledge of the esoteric laws and hidden meanings (the *ta'wīl*).<sup>69</sup> Thus it is through the mystery of Adam-Eve—two beings in one, the text of the religious law *and* the esoteric exegesis

66 Cf. our "Rituelsabéen," pp. 204ff.

67 Cf. Idrīs, *Zahr*, ch. 13; the article of Lewis in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies* (n. 42 above), pp. 702-3; *Tasawwurat*, p. 70. The texts of the Yemenite tradition relate Adam's error and repentance to those of the Angel; the prohibitions enjoined upon Adam are compared to the situation of the third Angel; the tree he was not to approach was the ontological rank of the *Tali*, the second Angel who follows the first but who stands in the relation of *Sābiq* (of him who precedes) to the third, etc.

68 And on these ideas of "paradise in *potentia*" and "Angels in *potentia*" rest the entire Ismaili anthropology and ethic (cf. *Zahr*, ch. 12; *Jāmi' al-Ḥikmatayn*, ch. 13; *Tasawwurat*, pp. 59-60, 93-94). Cf. below and our "Rituel sabéen," pp. 199-200, 243-44.

69 *Tasawwurat*, p. 70. Cf. the *Jāmi' al-Ḥikmatayn* of Nāsīr-e Khosraw (ch. 19, § 226, p. 209): the *waṣī*, the repository of the esoteric sense of the symbols, is regarded as the spiritual mother of the adept, while the Prophet, proclaimer of the letter, is his father.

that transcends it, the Prophet *and* the Imam, the Proclaimer (*Nāṭiq*) *and* the Silent One (*Ṣāmī*)—that the fruit of the positive religion, and the final Resurrection (*qiyāmat*), can spring forth. It is worth noting that Ismaili esotericism here configures its supreme symbol as the conjunction of the masculine and the feminine, which was also the great symbol of Hermeticism. The consummation of this mystery will mark the completion of the Grand Cycle, when the last Imam will proclaim and accomplish the Grand Resurrection. All the adepts, distributed through all the ranks of the esoteric hierarchy, compose the mystical Body, the Temple of Light of this Imām-Resurrector.<sup>70</sup> It is the horizon of Resurrection which for each adept gives its meaning to the Time of combat; here too "the history of the universe is that of the kingdom of the Spirits."<sup>71</sup>

RESURRECTION AS THE HORIZON OF THE TIME OF  
"COMBAT FOR THE ANGEL"

It is evident that this conception of the Imam as lord of Resurrection, summit of the eternal Imāmate in which culminates the Ismaili vision of the aeon, is far above the political ideology of a final successor who will be a legitimate descendant of the Alids.<sup>72</sup> This political ideology was effaced by the Gnostic idea of the Imam as Anthropos or as the Perfect Child (*al-walad al-tāmm*) who engenders himself in the secret of the cycles of the aeon, and who, in his eschatological Epiphany, is expected to be the ultimate "exegete" of mankind, a member of the true posterity of Adam,<sup>73</sup>

70 Cf. Strothmann, *Texte*, I, 1; VI, 3; XIII, 2; *Tasawwurāt*, pp. 149-54; *Jāmi' al-Ḥikmatāin*, ch. 9, § 117, p. 121.

71 Schelling, *Essais*, p. 215.

72 With the transformation of the concept of the Imam, Persian Ismailism becomes eminently a religion of personal salvation, taken as a religion of Resurrection. Cf. the interesting remarks of W. Ivanow on the aspect of doctetic Christology assumed by the doctrine of the Imam as divine epiphany, *Tasawwurāt*, p. LXXVIII (cf. also below, n. 100). Here a vast field of inquiry opens. Unfortunately what one might call the "secret of Alamūt" still eludes us—that is to say, we do not know the reasons why August 8, 1164, was chosen as the date for the Grand Resurrection, for the advent of the Religion of Absolute Truth; cf. *ibid.*, pp. LXXVI and LXXX, LXXVII, and LXXIX, and *Kalāmi Pir*, p. xxxv. And perhaps there is a hopeless paradox, if not a *desperatio fiducialis*, in proclaiming the divulging of the esoteric meaning: in so becoming exoteric, will it not in turn necessitate a new *ta'wīl*? The danger of this *regressio ad infinitum* seems to have been discerned by the commentator on Avicenna's mystical tale entitled "Ḥayy ibn Ya'qzān" (cf. the translation following our study, *Avicenne et le Récit visionnaire* (Teheran and Paris, 1954).

73 This posterity, it should be recalled, does not include *all* human beings (for mankind also embraces the posterity of Iblis), but only those "whose Angel" by associating him-

which he will lead back (*ta'wil*) to the celestial archetype in which it originated. Just as the universal primordial Adam is the first earthly manifestation of the spiritual Adam or Angel of mankind, exemplified in the partial Adam of each cycle, so the Imam Resurrector, blossom of the eternal Imamate, will be its final *parousia*, as the ultimate primordial, earthly substitute for the Angel to whom he leads back. Among the spiritual Adam, the primordial earthly Adam, and the Resurrector (*Qa'im*), there is the same relation as among Gayomart, Zarathustra, and the Saoshyant to come, who will be *Zarathustra redivivus*. Similarly each of the Imām's manifestations, the Imam of each period, is only the manifestation of a unique and eternal<sup>74</sup> Imam who, in the person of the last among them, will consummate the totality of the Aeon or Grand Cycle.

By projecting itself on the horizon of the Imam Resurrector, the expectation now commands a process of resurrection which shakes the entire esoteric sodality by a movement that is communicated from degree to degree: each adept must "resuscitate" (or "suscite") an adept like himself—that is, by rising from degree to degree cause another at every step to rise to his own former rank.<sup>75</sup> The mystical Body, the Temple of Light (*Haykal al-nūr*) of the Imamate is thus constituted by the totality of adepts; *each one* reflects it in himself, just as the pupil of the eye can contain the highest mountain.<sup>76</sup> And precisely this comparison gives us an idea of the experience of eternity that is offered the adept: to reflect the whole of the Temple of the Imamate is to become in his own person an exemplification of the aeon; it is for each adept to attain to his own eternal person—that is to say, to angelicity *in actu*; it is, by a series of resurrections (*qiyāmāt*), to induce in himself the flowering of the Grand Resurrection (corresponding to the final Transfiguration, which in Mazdean Pehlevi is called *Frashokart, Restakhiz*).

This ethic of resurrection, to which we have already referred (as an ethic of struggle against a retard, against a being-surpassed), shows us each adept supporting the responsibility of the whole Temple of the Imāmate. By

self with the repentance of the third Angel at the time of the drama in Heaven, connects them archetypally with his battle against the posterity of Iblis.

74 *Taşawwurat*, p. LXXVI and p. 138; Strothmann, *Texte*, II, 5; cf. above, n. 50. Here one might compare the sequences: Gayomart, Zarathustra, Saoshyant (= *Zarathustra redivivus*). Spiritual Adam (the third Angel), earthly Adam (universal and partial), the Imam *Qa'im* (the "Perfect Child," herald, or "Angel" of Resurrection). Nuriel, Enoch, Metatron. Cf. also below, n. 101 and above, Part I, p. 140, n. 63.

75 Cf. Strothmann, *Texte*, I, 1; VIII, 3; XIII, 2.

76 *Ibid.*, I, 1.



virtue of this responsibility the adept does not merely live *in* a fragment of measurable and measured Time. He is himself the total Time of his own measure, and that is why the entire combat constituting the essence of cyclical Time is carried on in the cycle of his own life. Since this Time is a retard, the gap between the fall and the reconquest of angelic rank is the Time of the combat for the Angel.<sup>77</sup> This expression (which results from our situation and reverses the famous image of the "combat *with* the Angel") is to be understood in a twofold sense. It is a combat *for* the person of the Angel of mankind (the third Angel who has become tenth), for the Angel does not carry on alone the combat which is to lead to the final reabsorption of Iblis-Ahriman, whose form reappears throughout the cycles of Occultation. But, since they have assumed his repentance and his nostalgia, his fellows, made in his image, become responsible in their own person for the combat that they wage *for him*. It is their own Iblis that they must hurl into the abyss, and in so doing they battle for the Angel who is in them *in potentia*. To reflect in oneself the Temple of the eternal Imāmate is to anticipate the consummation of the aeon; it is here "to become aeon," to produce in oneself the mutation of cyclical or measured Time, and for each adept this consists in assuming in his person an increasing exemplification of the Angel's being. This implies that what occurs in and by the person of each adept also affects the being of the Angel who is their archetype and who finds his exemplification in them.

Thus we are confronted with situations which reflect one another. The experience of Time lived as a totality here presents a character similar to that which we analyzed at the end of Part I; here speculative foundation and spiritual experience meet. The Figures shine through one another and exemplify one another. The tenth Angel shines through the person of the

77 Unfortunately I cannot here discuss at any length the highly original aspect which the idea of this combat of and for the Angel assumes in the *Tasawwurat* (*jihād-erūhāni, aqlāni, haqiqi*), where it is related to the triple auto-intellection by which, according to the schema of Avicenna, each 'Aqlor Angel, by understanding his own being, confers existence on three things: another Angel, a Heaven, and the Soul which is the mover of this Heaven. Ch. 14 (on good and evil) opens with a brief recollection of Zoroastrian dualism, which is rejected, it goes without saying, but reintroduced a few pages further on, where the primordial Insience (*Jahl-e-awwal*) is opposed to the primordial Intelligence (*'Aql-e-awwal*), and "a substance exhausting itself in nothingness" is opposed to a "true substance" these being the source respectively of evil and good creatures. The Ismaili *da'wat* "separates" the antitheses (cf. the Mazdean *vičarishn*). It acts upon the primordial Intelligence and the true substance like the elixir of alchemy; upon their opposites it has no effect.

primordial Adam, through that of each partial Adam, and finally through the person of the Imam Resurrector; and similarly the Imam Resurrector is already manifested and announced in the person of every Imam of every period. One and the same archetypal Figure, the eternal Imam recurs in multiple exemplifications, just as all the adepts have their celestial archetype in the Angels who followed the tenth Angel in his repentance. This exemplification gives them their archetypal dimension and constitutes them as the cast of characters in a cyclical drama whose prologue was played in Heaven and whose antagonists meet again in every period, in every generation.<sup>78</sup>

The special and characteristic nature of the situation is shown in this process of *exemplification*, which constitutes the individual person and raises him to the dimension of an archetypal Person. Essentially, the perception of all reality becomes the perception, or visualization, of a concrete person. This situation creates the schema of a fundamental angelology, which is essentially the mode of self-understanding of an existence which undergoes what we may now call an *angelomorphosis*—that is to say, the passage from “angelicity in *potentia*” to “angelicity in *actu*,” which is the positive culmination of the Ismaili anthropology.<sup>79</sup> On the other hand, this exemplification which personifies all reality in a concrete person presupposes both coincidence *and* distance, identity *and* difference, and for this reason the totality must also be present in the “every instance.” This recurrence is the foundation of the *homology* between the total cycle of the aeon and the cycle of resurrections which in the life of the adept constitutes his ascension from one esoteric degree to another. In the Ismaili theosophy the idea of an exemplification of archetypal persons and the idea of a homology between the cycles define the religion of Resurrection (*da'wat-e qiyāmāt*) as an angelomorphosis.

1. *Archetypal Persons*. How is exemplification possible? It is to Nasīraddīn Tūsī that we owe the elements of a brief and profound analysis. It seems to postulate that the aspect of action which we state in the infinitive, or the aspect of the event which we denote by an abstract noun, are by no means the true aspect of their reality, and that in the last analysis they refer back to the person of the *agent* who enacts the action or the event as the true reality of both. For all mental or ideal reality, every concept (*mana*) in the

78 Cf. our study, “Le Livre du Glorieux,” pp. 61–65.

79 Cf. “Rituel sabéen.”

world of the universal has its counterpart in the world of the individual: a concrete person (*shakhs-e'ayni*) outside of which this ideal or mental reality remains virtuality and pure abstraction.<sup>80</sup> Everything takes place as though the question "Who is it?" were substituted for the question "What is it?"—as though to name the *person* were to define its *essence*; and it is to this person and not to the abstract, universal concept that the *ta'wil* or internal exegesis leads back.<sup>81</sup> We gain this impression by juxtaposing propositions such as these: "Paradise is a *person* (or a human being)." <sup>82</sup> "Every thought, every word, every action *is* a person." <sup>83</sup> And finally: "Every true thought, every true word, every good action *has* an Angel." <sup>84</sup>

Around these propositions Nasir Tūsī develops an analysis which may well be called phenomenological. To be in Paradise, or to come into this world, designates above all different modes of being and understanding.<sup>85</sup> It means either to exist in true Reality (*haqiqat*), or, on the contrary, to "come into this world"—that is to say, to pass into the plane of an existence which in relation to that other is merely a metaphoric existence (*majāz*). Measured time, too, is only a metaphor for absolute Time. Thus coming into this world has meaning only with a view to leading that which is metaphoric back to true being, and the external (exoteric, *zāhir*) back to the internal (esoteric, *bāṭin*), by means of an exegesis (*ta'wil*) which is also an exodus from existence. Here, then, we have a mode of understanding (*modus intelligendi*) in which a mode of being (*modus essendi*) is expressed. Even while one is materially present in this world, there is a mode of being in Paradise;<sup>86</sup> but it goes without saying that this *mode of being*, Paradise, can be realized, can exist "in the true sense," only in a person who precisely

80 *Taşawwurat*, p. 62 (p. 46 of the Persian text). 81 Cf. "Rituel sabeen," p. 230.

82 *Taşawwurat*, pp. 39-60; and "Rituel sabeen," pp. 241-42.

83 *Taşawwurd*, p. 60. 84 *Ibid.*

85 *Ibid.*, p. 91 (p. 63 of the text). This whole passage is of the greatest importance.

86 Such is the meaning of the "person of the (= that which is the) *sirāt mostaqim*" (which corresponds eschatologically to the Činvat Bridge of Mazdaism); cf. *Taşawwurat*, pp. 62-63 (45-46 of the text). "The man whose head is raised toward the heavenly periphery (*mohit*), even while his feet are in the earthly center. Although in relation to the Angel he has not yet arrived at the World of absolute freedom, compared to the animal, he has already attained to it." The person who exemplifies this archetype of the "strait way" is the person who lives in the world beyond as though this beyond were already his present existence, and who carries all the aspects of this present existence back to something unique. This is the internal metamorphosis, the state of discerning lucidity accomplished by the secret of the *ta'wil* (*bāṭin-e ta'wil*), and such precisely is the Angel's (*fereshita*) mode of existence in contrast to that of the jinni (*peri*) or demon (*div*). Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 64 (47 of the text), 81-82 (57-58 of the text).

is this Paradise—that is to say, who always personifies this mode of being. It is clear that because personification corresponds to an archetype, it is here the exact opposite of allegory.

Fundamentally we may say that since the reality of the act, of the event, is thus reduced to the person who enacts it and understood as that person's mode of existence, every *verb* is mentally conjugated in the middle voice (e.g., the ἀποφαινείσθαι of the phenomenology which shows *itself* the *phainomenon*). Or else we find a circuit of thought similar to that which in the Archangel's eternally actuated being (*azalī*) seizes upon the very act of eternally being (*azal*), which by eternally actuating his being (*azalīyat*) becomes personified in the Archangel.<sup>87</sup> Here action, thought, or word have their term in the agent: they are reflected and personified in him, by making him to be what they are. They are his modes of being; they are in "every instance" *this* person. In this light, the person in whom his own action is incarnated is the *significatiopassim* of his action—that is to say, he is what his action *makes him be*.

But that implies that this person is an *agent* only in a superficial and metaphoric sense. More active than the person himself is the thought that is thought through him, the word that is spoken by him (and personified in him). And this thought of his thought is precisely what Nasīr Tūsi calls the Angel of this thought (or of this word or action).<sup>88</sup> This Angel endows the soul with the aptitude for thinking it and rising by it; he is the Archetype, the finality without which a cause would never be a cause. He is the "destiny" of that soul. The subjective case becomes an instrumental. The act of thinking is simultaneously a being-thought (*cogitor*) by the Angel,<sup>89</sup>

87 This is the "hermeneutic circuit" (cf. above, Part 2, sec. 1), the phenomenological rotation of which presents the action as a *fi'l* whose *maf'ul* refers to the agent—that is to say, is done and concluded *in* and *for* the agent. The *intention* of the "middle voice" leads one to consider in the *maf'ul* of every action the modification of the agent's mode of being, his event. It leads one to discover the transcendent subject, which is here the angel. The problem of the *intellectus agens* and the *intellectus patiens* in Arabo-Persian Neoplatonism might be considered in this connection. We shall return to it elsewhere.

88 *Taşavvurāt*, p. 60 (p. 44 of the text, last par.): "Every true thought, every truthful word, every good action has a spiritual (*rūhāniya*) entity—that is to say, the Angel (*fereshṭa*) who endows the soul, in its progressive rise, with the ability to pass easily through the successive degrees of perfection and return to its original source. Then this soul becomes a magnificent Angel (*fereshṭa-yakarīm*), and the Angels of its thought, speech, and action become integral parts of it, setting their imprint upon it."

89 In thinking this thought the person who thinks it is thought by the Angel, or on the contrary by a demon, for the alternative can only be the person "without an Angel." Cf. *ibid.*

causing the soul to be what he himself is. The ethic is posited not in terms of values but in terms of the Angel's modes of being. The propositions stated above (every thought *is* a person . . . every true thought *has* an Angel) describe a hermeneutic circle which fuses the schema of *angelology* with the process of *angelomorphosis*, and it is in this fusion that the possibility of exemplification resides.

The soul performs its action and understands it only beginning with the act which actuates the soul itself. It can become a magnificent Angel (*fereshta-ykarīm*) or an accursed demon,<sup>90</sup> deciding its eschatology through the very thing that it exemplifies. For its action is then its own form, which it sends out in advance of itself as its herald, and which is in the image of the Angel—or of the demon—who comes to meet it after death, announcing: "I am thyself." The burgeoning and growth in the soul of the angelical or demoniacal virtuality is the measure of its ascent (*mi'rāj*), or of its fall into the abyss. In the first case, as our author says: "Its thought becomes an Angel issuing from the original world; its word becomes a *spirit* issuing from that Angel; its action becomes a *body* issuing from this spirit."<sup>91</sup>

2. *The homology of the cycles of Resurrection (Qiyāmāt)*. At the end of this ascension, the adept has completed the Time of his "combat for the Angel." The increasing exemplification of the angelical form which is potentially in the soul leads the soul back to its origin. It is the elimination of its own Iblis: as such, the individual existence of the adept forms a cycle homologous to the Grand Cycle by which the tenth Angel progressively annuls the form of Iblis which he tore out of himself at the time of the "drama in heaven." These are two aspects of one and the same combat, the combat which the heavenly Angel and the virtual or earthly Angels carry on together. Between the two there prevails the same homology as between all the degrees of being through which—by virtue of the Great Return, the *ta'wīl* that is the

90 To be made the "person of the Angel," or the "person of Salmān," to become the "Salmān of the microcosm," etc. Cf. our "Rituel sabéen," pp. 242ff., and "Le Livre du Glorieux," § 6.

91 *Taṣawwūrāt*, p. 102 (70 of the text). Moreover, his "homogeneity with divine Reality implies that his *anīma* (*nafs*) is conjoined with the light of the religion of the True Absolute (*da'wat-eḥaqq*) and that through the energy of the Angel (*ruhānīya*) of this religion, an Angel (*fereshta*) is appointed to guard over his thought, in which he preserves forever the ornament of the divine truth." *Ibid.* And man's angelomorphosis is correlative to an anthropomorphosis of the celestial universe, since the glorified human form is its form of light and that of all the other beings of Light. Cf. also Strothmann, *Texte*, I, 1; *Jāmi' al-Iḥkmatāin*, last paragraph of ch. 11; Idrīs, *Zahr*, ch. 12 and above, n. 86.

cycle of combat for the Angel—the past is abolished and metamorphosed into the future of Resurrection (*Qiyāmāt*).

In a stirring vision Nasīr Tūsi describes the contiguity of all the series of being, each communicating by its highest degree with the lowest degree of the series immediately above it. Thus the worlds of minerals, plants, and animals, the world of man, and the world of the Angel are graduated. And always the higher degree resembles Paradise for the degree below it. The same is true of the phases of a single being. The condition in which an infant cannot yet open his eyes in the sunlight is like his Hell in relation to the condition in which he can face the light, and the latter condition is then like his Paradise. But it is his Hell in relation to the condition in which he can walk and talk. Hell, again, is the condition in which the adult cannot yet attain to knowledge of the spiritual world through that of his own spirit and in which he is unable to experience the meaning of the adage: "He who knows himself (*naḥsahuḥis anima*), knows his Lord." When he attains to it, this state becomes his Paradise.<sup>92</sup> In this vision of an incessant rising from Hells, we see an *alchemy of Resurrection* operating from cycle to cycle. It offers a series of unfoldings, of divestments and revestments, to which one must consent on pain of falling backward, beneath oneself.

Here we may also speak of a "continual exaltation"<sup>93</sup> a cosmology "in Gothic style," or of a pursuit of "retarded eternity." Just as their Fravartis sustain the gods themselves (including Ohrmazd and his Archangels) in this state of ascension, and just as the Fravartis incarnated on earth must there propagate this effort toward superexistence, so likewise, in the Ismaili schematization of the world,<sup>94</sup> the sum of the degrees of the esoteric hierarchy appears to the adept as a cycle of *resurrections*, each one of which must be transcended, as a succession of Paradises which must be surmounted on pain of falling back into a Hell. Each rank or spiritual degree is a resurrection (*qiyāmāt*) whereby the adept becomes conjoined with new immaterial forms which appear on his horizon.<sup>95</sup>

And just as each of the periods of our cycle is concluded by an Imām-

92 *Taṣawwurat*, pp. 58–59 (43 of the text, bottom).

93 Cf. above, Part 1, end of sec. 2. Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, tr. Bolman, p. 149. Rudolf Otto, *Mysticism East and West*, tr. B. L. Bracey and R. C. Payne (New York, 1932), pp. 184ff.

94 One should also remember the constantly affirmed homology among the mesocosmos ('*ālam-e Din*, the initiatic cosmos), the world of nature, and the celestial world.

95 Cf. Strothmann, *Texte*, IX, 5; Idāh 11 and Ism 2-3; Idrīs, *Zahr*, quoted in Ivanow, *The Rise of the Fatimids* (Bombay, 1942), p. 243 (54-55 of the Arabic text).

Qā'im, so likewise each of the adepts occupying an esoteric rank is a Qā'im, a Resurrector, in respect to the adept of the next lower rank: by a simultaneity of *action* and of *passion* he must "resuscitate" the following (*tālī*) adept to the rank which he himself had hitherto occupied, while he himself must "be resuscitated" to the next higher rank. The movement of perpetual elevation is propagated from the summit to the base of the mystical hierarchy. Finally, just as the seven periods of a cycle are closed by a Grand Resurrection (*Qiyāmat-e-Qiyāmāt*), instituted by the Qa'im par excellence, the "Perfect Child" who leads back (*ta wit*) to the Angel all those in the cycle who have belonged to his posterity—that is, who have borne his image and fought his battle—so, likewise, at the end of the cycle of his individual life, at the seventh degree of his ascension, the adept finds himself on the threshold of the perfect angelicity (*fereshtagī*) of the tenth Intelligence.<sup>96</sup> This is the dawn of his Grand Resurrection. Thus his own initiate's life reproduces the whole cycle or aeon whose totality the Imam Resurrector will complete in his person when limited time *reverts* to absolute Time. By this homology the adept also anticipates his eternity.

In the end the vision embraces all the universes and draws the physical universe of material bodies toward Resurrection.<sup>97</sup> When the highest degree of potency which consolidates the mineral universe is conjoined with the first degree of vegetal potency, the resurrection of mineral nature occurs. In a similar way, plants and animals are resurrected in the next higher order. And finally the angelical potency is the Resurrection of the human potency carried to its highest perfection. Just as the vital soul is like a *body* in relation to the imaginative soul; so the latter in turn is like a body in relation to the thinking human soul; and the latter, finally, is like a body in relation to the angel (the angelic Intelligence, 'aql). When each of these souls is existenti-ated in the form immediately above it, this is the corporal resurrection (*ḥashr-e-jasadānī*).<sup>98</sup>

96 The decade is completed by three superior esoteric ranks corresponding respectively to the third Angel, to the *Tali*, and to the *Sābiq* (*Nafand* 'Aql, second and first Angels), the primordial pair from which issued the third Angel (become tenth after his error) and the Seven Cherubim Angels, or Words, of the pleroma of the *Ibdā*. Cf. Hamīd Kermānī, above, n. 31.

97 Cf. *Taṣawwūrāt*, pp. 93-94 (64-65 of the Persian text).

98 The text of the *Taṣawwūrāt* recalls one of the doctrines which Shahrastānī attributes to Empedocles (*Kitūbal-mīlāl*, lith., Teheran, 1288 A.H., p. 165, li. 11), though here *jasad*, body, is replaced by *qīshr*, shell, rind, also garment. On this point P. Duhem pointed to the kinship in language and conception between this doctrine and that of the *Zohar*; cf. *Le Système du monde . . . de Platon à Copernic* (Paris, 1917), Vol. V, pp. 121-22.

At the end of our study we perceive a common typology in the horizons of Resurrection set forth in the Mazdean and Ismaili visions. In neither vision is Resurrection an event that simply occurs one fine day. In Ismailism it is accomplished in the person of all those who are "resuscitated" up to its triumphant unfolding in the person of the last Imam, the *parousia* of the tenth Angel. It is the work of each one of the adepts; its time is brought about by the involution of the time of each individual. Similarly in Mazdaism the Fravartis incarnated on earth to fight the combat of Ohrmazd begin in their own person and action the event of the final Transfiguration. This is the sentiment expressed in the often repeated Zoroastrian prayer: "May we be those who bring about the Transfiguration of the world." <sup>99</sup>

In both doctrines we find a chivalrous ethic inspired by the feeling that evil and suffering are not inflicted by a divine being who consents to them while remaining aloof from them. This suffering is in the divine being himself since it is in his creatures; and by rejecting and combating it, all his followers make a rampart of their souls for him.<sup>100</sup> In both cases, the great moments of the cosmic drama are announced and "dated" in the homologous periods of the cycles by the apparition of figures which are conceived

Nasir Tūsi speaks of a kind of perpetual alchemy, a formation and unfolding of the spiritual Body. Here we can only mention in passing the fine texts in which Schelling speaks of the "general ability of matter to be raised again to spiritual properties" (*Ages of the World*, p. 173). "Thus man does not pass into the world of spirits with only his spirit in the restricted sense of the word, but also with that which in his body was himself, with what was spiritual in this body" (*Essais*, tr., pp. 357-58). *Reductio ad essentiam*: it is the task of soul to guide its corporeal senses to their perfection. Thus the soul resuscitates through the body, just as the body resuscitates through the soul. In the end, as Nasir Tusi says, the spiritual and the corporeal will be one, and it is precisely because of this that "the Angel can become visible after death" (below, n. 102).

<sup>99</sup> Yasna, XXX, 9.

<sup>100</sup> The Persian word *Javānmard*, which recurs frequently in Shiite Sufism, is best translated by "spiritual knight." It corresponds to the piety and passionate devotion which the idea of the Imam, of the eternal Imam, inspires in the Friend of God exposed on earth to the implacable contradiction of men. Between the two branches of Ismailism, and even more so between them and Duodeciman Shiism, there are, to be sure, nuances and changes which profoundly modify the spiritual physiognomy. A proto-Ismailian treatise such as the *Omm al-Kitāb* (The Mother of the Book) abounds in precise Manichaean reminiscences and features borrowed from the apocryphal books of the Bible. On the other hand, as we have pointed out above (n. 72), the concept and the figure of the Imān led to a recurrence of the problems encountered in Christology. Indeed, all the positions from Arianism to the theology of St. Athanasius recur in speculative Imāmology. Cf. R. Strothmann, *Die Zwölfher-Schi'a* (Leipzig, 1926): pp. 79ff., 155ff.



as the recurrence of one and the same eternal Figure.<sup>101</sup> Finally, in both Mazdaism and Ismailism we have the same denouement of the individual eschatology: the face-to-face encounter between the human I and the celestial I, because the soul finally sees its "self." The episode of the feminine angel Daēnā in Mazdaism has its exact counterpart in Nāsīraddīn Tūsī's angel of the amiable and beautiful form, who becomes the companion of the soul for all the eternities.<sup>102</sup> It is the vision of the I knowing itself and finding itself in a transcendent I (a *paredros*), which is both the same and different, as in one same essence without confusion of persons, since a dialogue at once confirms the authenticity of the vision. But this celestial dimension of the Soul of the Perfect One is confirmed and visualized only after the cycle of his resurrections has been completed (after Time has ceased to "retard" over against Eternity); in both doctrines it completes the cycle of the Return, the combat "for the angel."

To the triple question of the little Mazdean catechism cited at the beginning of this study corresponds a situation which, as I have said, Nāsīr Tūsī analyzes with the sure hand of the phenomenologist. Here is its conclusion: "To come into this world" and into the time of this world, should not be confused with corporeal presence in the world of existence: it is above all a mode of understanding this existence. To come into this world, as we said a moment ago, can have no significance other than to convert its metaphoric reality (*majāz*) into its True Reality (*ḥaqīqat*).<sup>103</sup> Our author makes it clear that there can be beings who, although they have in appearance come into this world, since they are *there*, have in fact never come into it.<sup>104</sup> Inversely—and here the analysis becomes most striking—there are men whom we can visually discern to have left this world. They are dead, they are no longer there. We say: "They have departed." No,

<sup>101</sup> Cf. *Taṣawwūrāt*, p. 138 (94 of the text). G. Messina, / *Magi a Bellemme* (Rome, 1934), pp. 59ff.; it is curious to note that the term *al-monba'ith al-thālith* (= the Qā'im, *Texte*, IV, 3) is a literal parallel to the Tertius Legatus of the Manichaean soteriology. Cf. n. 74, above.

<sup>102</sup> *Taṣawwūrāt*, p. 94 (65 of the text). Cf. n. 98 above and nn. 76-80 of Part I. Cf. also the motif of the celestial *houris* in Nāsīr Tusī, *Āghāz o Anjūm* (lith., Teheran, 1320A.H.), p. 24. There are abundant exemplifications of the archetype; cf. the motif of the robe in *Ada Thomae*, etc.

<sup>103</sup> *Taṣawwūrāt*, pp. 91-92 (63 of the text). It is to accomplish (and undergo) the metamorphosis of the *ta'wil*; cf. above, n. 86, and Nāsīr-e Khosraw, *Jāmi' al-Ḥikmatain*, ch. 14, pp. 163, 166 (to be on the Earth of Tomorrow, which it is said will be illumined by the Light of its Lord, whereas today this Earth still holds us shrouded in Night).

<sup>104</sup> *Taṣawwūrāt*, p. 91.

actually they have never left this world and they will never leave it. For to leave this world it does not suffice to die. One can die and remain in it for ever. One must be living to leave it. Or rather, to be living is just this.<sup>105</sup> Can we distinguish in the winter, as Nāsīr-e Khosraw says, between a living tree and a dead tree? Both, it is true, are materially there. But in one the sap flows secretly. In the other the sap does not flow, because its roots are dead. When the spring comes—that is, the Imam of Resurrection—only the first will be covered with flowers and savorous fruits at his call.<sup>106</sup> It is no indulgence in a mere literary reminiscence if the image of the Iranian philosopher suggests this thought of Balzac: "Resurrection is accomplished by the wind of heaven that sweeps the worlds. The Angel carried by the wind does not say: Arise ye dead! He says: Let the living arise!"<sup>107</sup>

105 *Ibid.*, p. 92 (63 of the text, end).

106 In *Six Chapters*, ed. Ivanow, pp. 85–86 of the translation.

107 In *Louis Lambert* (Paris, 1902), p. 151.